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#31 WINTER 1998

Backstreets

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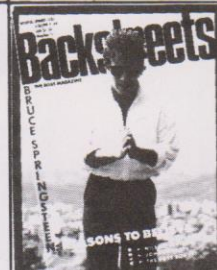
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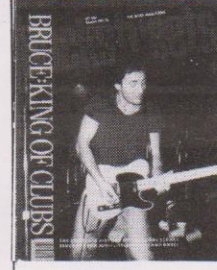
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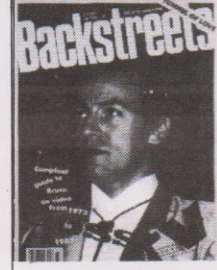
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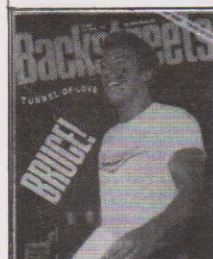
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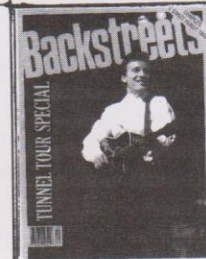
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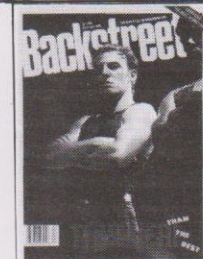
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Backstreets

A BOSS MAGAZINE

Backstreets (ISSN 0746-990X) is published quarterly by Backstreets Publishing, Inc., PO Box 51225, Seattle, WA 98115, USA with offices at 2028-5th Avenue, Seattle, WA (please address all correspondence to *Backstreets*, PO Box 51225, Seattle WA 98115)—subscriptions are available for \$15 a year or \$25 for two years in the US and Canada (payment must be in US funds only), or for overseas airmail, rates are \$20 a year or \$35 for two years (again only in US funds). All contents are copyright © 1989, Backstreets Publishing, Inc. Please include a self addressed, stamped envelope with any inquiries. **FAX: (206) 728-8827**

Second class postage paid at Seattle, Washington, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Please send all address changes to *Backstreets*, PO Box 51225, Seattle, WA 98115. Thank you.

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Winter 1989

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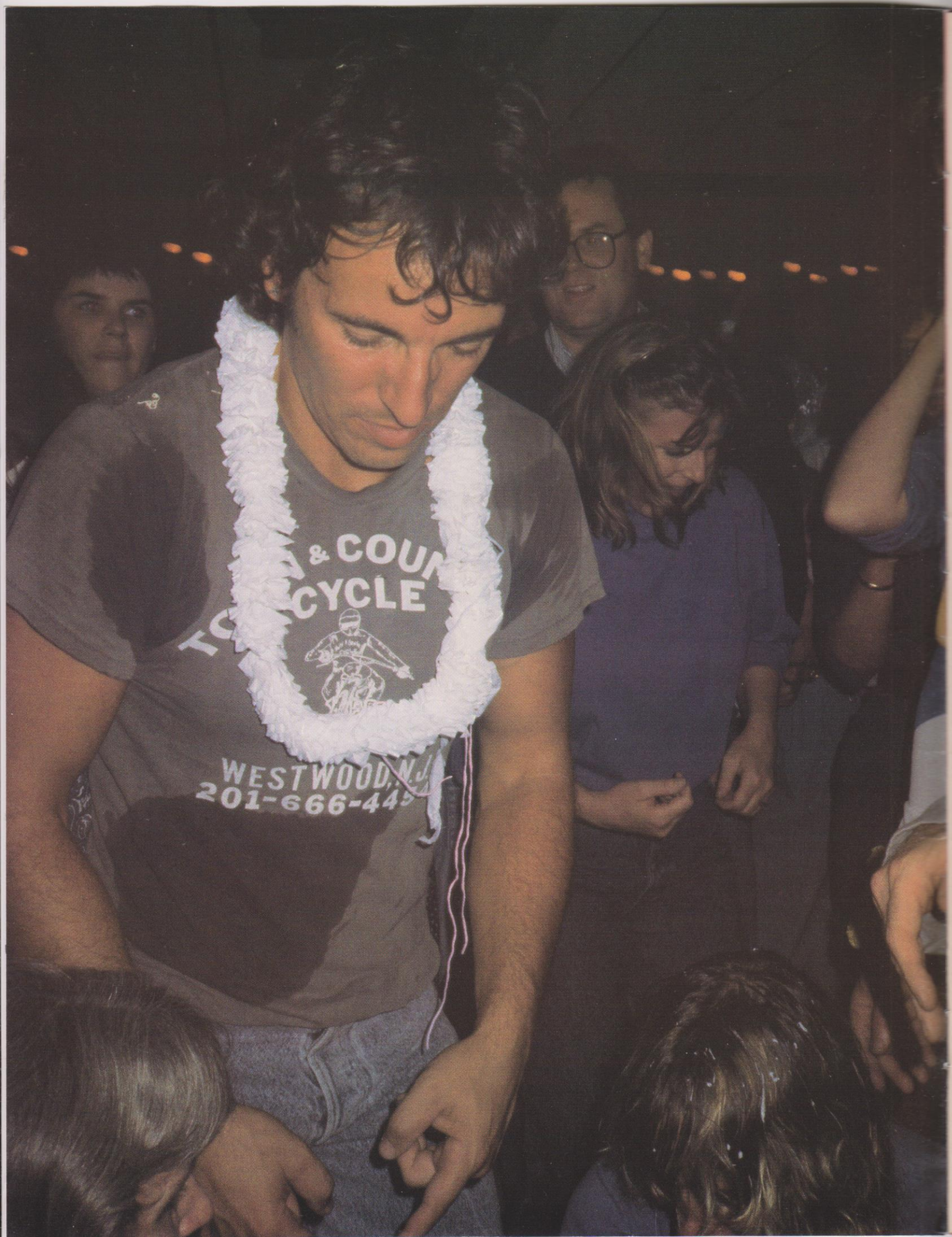
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BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN AND BUBBLES
PRESCOTT, AZ 9/29/89
Photo by Steven Kittelsrud/The Prescott Courier
Design and coloring by Emily Hammack



On the backstreets

WARM AS TOAST. THAT'S EXACTLY HOW Ray Smith describes crawling into his sleeping bag, curling up in front of a campfire and falling into a wild and wonderful dream of angels. Smith, if you're not familiar with him, is the protagonist of the classic novel *The Dharma Bums*, by Jack Kerouac, for my money one of the most passionate pieces of fiction from a writer ever. The book has become something of a Bible of sorts for me and whenever I'm traveling I carry it around as a sort of Fodor's "Guide to the Soul." And tonight, on the road again, I find myself dreaming fondly of crawling into my own bed — okay, it's a futon — and curling up warm as toast on my own unwashed sheets.

But instead of cooking toast in my own toaster, I find myself a wayfarer tonight, traveling America in an effort to promote our recent book *Backstreets, Springsteen: The Man and His Music*, just out from Harmony Books. And honestly, this tour has already become the stereotypical blur where I'm not exactly sure what town I'm in tonight, nor am I sure where I am tomorrow. I'm really a homebody of sorts and suddenly feel out of place whenever I'm more than a mile away from my neighborhood all night 7-Eleven. But the town I'm in tonight — if it's Wednesday it must be Philadelphia — closes down the 7-Elevens at midnight, so I'm going through Slurpee withdrawals.

And if that timing isn't bad enough, consider this: I'm out on the road promoting a major book on Bruce Springsteen, one of the most positive and revealing tomes yet published on the guy, and it just so happens to be the very week news gets out that maybe he's dumping the E Street Band. If you know much about *Backstreets*, the magazine or the book, you know that as a fan of Bruce Springsteen's music I try to keep his personal life separate from my appreciation of his music. My line on this, at least to reporters earlier in the day, was that when I first saw Bruce in 1974, I didn't walk out of the hall saying, "Wow, what a great show! Wonder who this guy is sleeping with?" That line goes over with most reporters like a lead zeppelin as they seem to want to follow that up with a question like, "Well, really, what is he really like?" So despite my efforts to keep any questions and answers to the matter of Springsteen's music, I find myself getting asked every ten minutes exactly what I think about Springsteen firing the band. Never mind that as far as I'm aware at this moment, he didn't fire the band — instead he simply said, "feel free to pursue other projects this next year." But of course the question comes at me as, "What do you think about Bruce Springsteen firing the band?" And I can't avoid this one because this very issue may indeed fall on the side of the line where it deals with his professional life, his career, his music, the very things I do care a great deal about. So here, 3,000 miles from my own unmade bed, I find myself forced to confess. This is exactly what I think:

If Bruce Springsteen really has fired the E Street Band, then he's made a mistake. Not because he shouldn't be allowed to change his career or because I want to keep him the same for the rest of his life — the sort of jackass assertions that Dave Marsh will probably attribute to me in his next Bruce book — but because this band has more talent than you can find on the entire Grammy Awards broadcast. The E Street Band have been an integral part of Bruce Springsteen's career during the past two decades, and without such talented musicians backing him — without David Sancious' start for "New York City Serenade," without Steve Van Zandt's impeccable production of *The River*, without Danny Federici's accordion on "Satin Doll," without Clarence Clemons' sax blast on "Be True," without Nils Lofgren's onstage foil, without Roy Bittan's "Once Upon the Time in the West" intro, without Garry Tallent's bass thump to end "Jungleland," and certainly without Max Weinberg's powering thunder on "Backstreets" — Bruce Springsteen would have never created what he did. Springsteen owes these guys more respect than to fire them, than to send them their walking papers as the TV reported tonight, and act like a Heisman Award-winning running back who gets to the mic at the ceremony and forgets to thank the linemen.

But at least as far as I can tell he hasn't exactly fired the band. I watched a ridiculous tabloid television show tonight that started off with the teaser, "The dirt on how Bruce Springsteen has fired the E Street Band." The story started with the old "he's given them their walking papers" line, and then, surprise of surprises, in some minor attempt to actually put some factual information into the piece, it essentially then retracted everything that had previously been said to say he'd simply told them to pursue other projects. And then this piece actually had the gall to go back on itself and end with the line "Springsteen, however, could call the band back together at any time to work on his next record." This sensationalistic reporting of fiction as fact is what we heard on almost every TV and radio station in America. A New York radio station I heard actually played Johnny Paycheck's "Take This Job and Shove It" and said it was the message Bruce had given the E Streeters.

At the moment we don't know the total story — you'll find a complete rundown on what we do know elsewhere in this issue — but at this point I'm waiting to see what might really happen. Springsteen essentially recorded one record in the 1980s in the studio with the entire E Street Band, and that was *Born in the USA*, my least favorite disc from him during that period. Many argue that his two strongest records are *Nebraska* and *Tunnel of Love* and both of those projects are essentially solo albums with minor band involvement. Springsteen has also put on some of his most poignant performances during the past few years in the acoustic solo context we saw at the Bridge Show and the S.O.S. Racism

Rally in Paris. It would certainly not surprise me to see Bruce Springsteen mount a solo, acoustic tour this next year as that direction is one that makes perfect sense considering his songwriting efforts over the past few albums.

But Bruce Springsteen onstage backed by Richard Marx's band doing "Backstreets" or "Thunder Road"? I don't think it will ever happen. Springsteen respects the E Street Band enough that even during most of his Jersey Shore club hopping he chooses not to perform his own material, sticking instead with oldies and Chuck Berry songs. Can Cats on a Smooth Surface create the same sound as the E Street Band? Not in my lifetime, though hearing Bruce play "Lucille" with this combo is a treat anytime.

My guess is that Bruce Springsteen doesn't exactly know what direction his music will take him in the next few years. He's always been the sort of performer to follow his muse and if there's any truth I've discovered in his music over the years it's that his muse moves him — and his audience — in strange ways, and with a power so majestic that it can hit you from left field at any time. Did you really expect a song like "State Trooper" to come from the guy who just two years previously had been all over the radio singing about his "Hungry Heart"? Did you expect "One Step Up" from an artist who literally found himself the most popular performer in the world just one year prior? And the first time you heard "Incident on 57th Street," did you really think anything could sound so romantic and yet so dark at the same time?

I'm waiting, as Little Steven might sing, and even if I occasionally don't trust Bruce Springsteen, the man, I do trust his muse. It's bigger than both of us, more powerful than a speeding tabloid headline. And wasn't Spanish Johnny the original Dharma Bum?

— Charles R. Cross

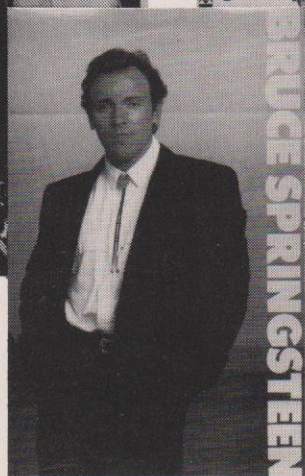
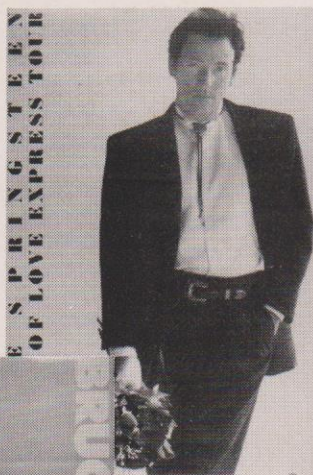
* * *

You may still have time to give a *Backstreets* gift subscription to your Bruce buddies this year — you'll find info on another page. What better gift to give than the gift of the Boss? And speaking of Boss buddies we'd like to extend a very special thank you to the wonderful fans who turned out for our *Backstreets* book bashes around the country — it was great meeting everyone and we do hope to do it again sometime in the future. As for the book, the first edition is close to being sold out. We're still looking for copies of reviews, etc., so if there's been one in your local paper please send us a clip. If not, call those suckers and bug them to review it! 🍌

Off the wall

Previous page: Turning 40 at Rum Runners 9/23/89. Photo by Debra L. Rothenberg. Back cover: Easter Sunday 1984. Photo by Billy Smith.

BRUCE POSTERS!



bouquet shot

Gorgeous color shot of Bruce holding roses. *Tunnel of Love Express Tour* poster.

BS888 **\$8⁰⁰**

beach shot

Outtake photo from the *Tunnel* sessions. White type down the side.

\$8⁰⁰

giant bouquet

Door sized (62"x20") printing of the bouquet shot.

BS835 **\$10⁰⁰**

glory days

2'x3' posed shot of Bruce wearing his headband. Sold on the *BIUSA* tour.

BS825 **\$6⁰⁰**

sweaty shot

2'x3' live shot of Bruce drenched in sweat in '84.

BS809 **\$6⁰⁰**

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BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN
TUNNEL OF LOVE EXPRESS TOUR



BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN TURNED 40 YEARS old on September 23rd and, as one might expect, the media made quite an issue of the event. Bruce himself celebrated that night with band members, friends and family at two club appearances on the 22nd and 23rd. Meanwhile, newspapers and magazines ran stories on the advancing age of our rock idols — other celebrities hitting 40 — and, of course, Bruce's "obvious" mid-life crisis.

The most inane of these pieces appeared in the September 19th issue of *Woman's World* under the subhead: "He's losing his boyish look. He's dumped his wife for his backup singer. What's going on?" Among the further proof listed was the fact that, "his concerts, once five-hour endurance marathons, now run half as long." Apparently the author, Ellen Byron, isn't counting last year's Stockholm and Mountain View shows, which rank among the ten longest Bruce has ever played. In a fit of insight, Ellen asks some talk show psychologists for their conclusions, which, as expected, are keen and accurate. "Instead of singing about Corvettes and Vietnam vets, his latest tunes offer painful insights into the perils of love." Guess we'll never get to hear "Corvette Ranch" in concert again. . . . On a brighter side of birthday news, the *Asbury Park Press* invited its readers to submit Bruce birthday cards in a contest, with all cards forwarded to Bruce. The winner, Patricia Russo-niello, designed a "Rock 'n' Roll G String," which is a guitar string with a leaf attached. We're not sure what that has to do with Springsteen, but other winners had warm greetings for Bruce on this important day. One runner-up, Kerrie Jackson of Staines, England, had her entry forwarded by *Backstreets* to the *Press*. Her card was accompanied by a request for Bruce to "please write her back." To emphasize this desire, she wrote the word "please" by hand 37,000 times.

MASTER OF THE UNIVERSE: Clarence Clemons has been working overtime in support of his new record, *A Night with Mr. C*, and his much sought after guest appearances. First, he finished up the US leg of Ringo Starr's tour, a show that received warm reviews across the nation. He then joined Jerry Garcia's band for some East Coast arena dates. He appeared on *Later with Bob Costas* for a half-hour interview, and then went on to Italy, where he, Eric Clapton and David Sancious joined an Italian superstar for some shows.

The Big Man wasn't through globe hopping yet, as he went to Japan with Ringo's band for three shows in early November and finally landed in Hollywood in time to appear on the *Grammy's Living Legends* special backing Liza Minelli. In between all this Clarence did local TV and press interviews on both coasts and in December, Clarence was set to do live shows in Los Angeles and San Francisco.

One of Clarence's old football teammates at Maryland State has been making headlines as



Jackson Browne and a Backstreets subscriber read their favorite magazine.

well, new Raider coach Art Shell, who played with Clarence in 1964. Said Clemons of Shell: "I remember Art very well. I was a senior and he was a quiet guy, a kid destined to make it. We all joked around a lot, but I'll tell you, nobody messed with Art Shell. He was a keg of dynamite waiting to explode." The Big Man had his own NFL connection, trying out for the Cleveland Browns before picking up the sax for good. . . .

On a sad note, famed British rock journalist Roger Scott died of cancer in November. Scott interviewed Springsteen a few times and his 1984 radio interview, also syndicated in the US, is probably the best from that era. His questions were always insightful and he was clearly a favorite journalist of Springsteen himself. . . . In London, a new rock museum has opened called Rock Circus, located in the London Pavilion in Picadilly Circus. It's a collection of wax figures created by the Madame Tussand Company, brought to life through the use of video, music narration and animatronics. Upon entering the museum, each visitor is given headphones which are activated by infrared signals at each exhibit. Through the use of animatronics, the wax figures are brought to life. Two hundred computer-generated signals lift Springsteen's guitar-strumming-right arm at the beginning of a "live" "Born in the USA." Could it be the next best thing to actually being there? . . .

THE TIMES ARE TOUGH: The *Cal State Fullerton Titan News* reports on advertising awards won by a few of the school's art majors. One clever ad that caught our eye promoted the use of condoms to prevent the spread of the AIDS virus. Above a picture of a sealed condom was type that reads: "Remember, Bruce Springsteen wrote 'Cover Me' before 'Tunnel of Love.'" Not the original mean-

ing, but a correct interpretation indeed. . . . In late September, another protest was held outside the White House to protest music censorship. Once again Bruce made his position perfectly clear in a supportive statement read by protestors that included Vernon Reid of Living Colour and Joseph Simmons of Run-DMC. . . . Gloria Estefan and the Miami Sound Machine are suing their ex-agent over a foul-up that involves Springsteen. Apparently, the group was originally scheduled by the agent to be part of last year's Amnesty tour, but were dropped when Springsteen joined and wanted to play a longer set. The Sound Machine contend that they did not accept live performance or production engagements for the five months' time that they had reserved for the tour. The suit is between the band and the former agent and does not involve Springsteen or Amnesty International directly. Too bad that we missed a chance for a Bruce and Gloria duet on "Conga." . . . Bruce has been spending much of his time in LA lately and, as always, the media have reported his daily activities. He was joined by Patti and Steven at the Rolling Stones shows in late October and he caught the band Dramarama at the Roxy in early November. One of the strangest reports appeared in a local paper and *Rock 'n' Roll Confidential* detailing a late night meeting between Bruce and rap star Tone-Loc. Tone wanted to buy the car Bruce was driving without realizing who he was talking to. The two stopped in the middle of the street to chat, with Bruce telling Tone that he liked his music. Tone-Loc said he didn't listen to any other music besides rap, but told Bruce "You're all right." A record store in Norway called Phonoteket has some good advice printed on their store sacks. Quoted on each are Bruce's words, "We learned more from a three-minute record than we ever learned in school." . . .

Springsteen: When you're alone...

BRUCE'S ANNOUNCEMENT THAT HE WILL not be using the E Street Band on his next LP and presumably his next tour has left the door wide open as to what his next move will be. Almost immediately following reports of the announcement came the first in a series of rumors about what that next move will be. There appear to be two camps forming on this one, based primarily on the assumed motivation for the announcement. One side figures Bruce made the move because he has a very specific next project in mind or ready to roll. Most of these rumors say Bruce has an album in the can, or plans to record for a release next summer or fall with a solo tour to follow.

The other camp has an opposite view of Bruce's rationale for the announcement. To their minds (and according to some sources), Bruce is very unclear about what he wants to do next and didn't want the band to sit idly by while he decides. Once again we hear stories of writer's block, extended time off, etc. Even Bruce's motorcycle trip to the Grand Canyon has been cited as evidence. As one longtime Bruce insider and fan put it, "Anytime you hear of him driving across the country or through the desert, you know he's looking for inspiration."

Another rumor lands somewhere in the middle, accepting that the next LP will be solo, but saying he will tour with the band in support of it.

As it so often does, this column is leading you to ask, "So what is really gonna happen?" Good question. First, as is said elsewhere in the magazine, Springsteen not working with the E Street Band in the studio has been par for the course in the '80s. That should come as a surprise to no one, with Bruce just publicly stating the obvious. But a tour without the band would be a change. If such a tour were to happen, one assumes it would have to be a solo tour or one augmented by a few musicians. This would allow Bruce to present new material from a solo album and would allow him to reinterpret some of his old songs. It would seem almost sacrilegious for him to go on the road with a new band, playing the old songs without radical rearrangements. It just makes no sense to hire someone to replace Garry Tallent, or any band member, who is going to play his parts note for note.

Rumors of Bruce not working with the band date back to the European dates on the *Tunnel* tour and one could build an argument for it dating back to the decision to tour behind *Tunnel of Love*. Because *Tunnel* had so little



involvement with the band, and wasn't going to require new arrangements, like the *Nebraska* songs did on tour, the E Street Band was for the first time playing parts of Bruce songs that had been played on the LP by someone else — in this case, Springsteen himself. Bruce's *Tunnel* show was a very calculated set and he switched the band's places on stage to symbolically shake things up a little bit.

It could be proposed that Springsteen was giving the band a chance to play this new material the way he wanted it, to in some sense change the band's sound, and to see if they could sustain a tour that was so specifically conceived. By the end of the *Tunnel* tour, much of the original set was abandoned, and the old in-concert warhorses (like "Thunder Road" and "Badlands"), which Springsteen had said just six months earlier needed a rest, were back in the set. Had the E Street Band failed? No, but the kind of show Bruce was playing at the end of the tour was probably not what he had hoped for at the beginning of the tour.

That long-winded theory is just that — a theory — but it does make some sense if Bruce is, indeed, trying for a new sound. To us, some type of solo tour makes the most sense. This was rumored to have been considered after *Tunnel*, but scrapped in favor of a full band tour. With the Bridge Show as evidence, a solo tour could be a powerful one if done right, and it also allows Bruce the most creative freedom with new and old material alike.

Bruce has at least done some recording with session musicians already, that being a cover of "Viva Las Vegas," which will be included on an Elvis Presley tribute record released in January. The recording was done in LA, but no word yet on who joined Bruce on the track. Dave Marsh had also stated publicly that he has heard Springsteen material recorded with other musicians, implying that some work on a solo album may already have taken place. Perhaps "Viva Las Vegas" will provide some clue as to the sound Bruce is hunting for.

Our best guess is that we will see a new Bruce Springsteen album in 1990, but we would only lay 50/50 odds on a tour to follow. If he does tour, we think it will be some type of solo tour or at least something other than a full E Street Band outing. ♪

1. **Bruce Springsteen**
Darkness on the Edge of Town
CBS (½ Speed Master LP)
2. **Roy Orbison and Friends**
A Black and White Night Live
Virgin (CD)
3. **Muddy Waters**
The Chess Box
Chess/MCA (6 LP set)
4. **Lenny Kravitz**
Let Love Rule
Virgin (CD)
5. **James McMurtry**
Too Long is the Wasteland
CBS (LP)
6. **Bruce Springsteen**
Born in the Studio
Bootleg (CD)
7. **Peter Dinklage**
Synesthesia
Island (LP)
8. **Van Morrison**
Moondance
Warner Bros. (CD)
9. **Bruce Springsteen**
Forced to Confess
Bootleg (CD)
10. **Deacon Blue**
When the World...
CBS (LP)

THE BACKSTREETS JUKEBOX



Ten monster discs, from no particular time period, with no particular connection except that you should play each and every one of them TODAY!

Van Halen and Bruce together again

THOUGH THE REST OF THE WORLD HAS not seen fit to keep Bruce Springsteen bins filled with new releases, Japan — as usual — isn't forgetting about the Boss. As has been the case for the past several years, Japan is still at the forefront of rare, limited new Springsteen releases. You might remember the recent CD compilations of Bruce Springsteen and Bob Dylan cuts (a collectible that now commands sky high prices because it's sought after by both Dylan and Bruce collectors). Following the same concept Culture Records has released a new compact disc that sounds unbelievable but does exist: *Bruce Springsteen and Van Halen*.

This disc includes 16 cuts — eight from Bruce and eight from Van Halen. The Bruce cuts are all from the early albums and include "Rosalita," "Thunder Road," "Born to Run," "Sandy," "Spirit in the Night," "Growin' Up," "10th Avenue," and the ever-popular tune with Van Halen fans everywhere, "Incident on 57th Street." As with some of the other weird Japanese CDs (i.e. the "Burce" collection), these songs seem to have been chosen because they are administered by Laurel Canyon and not by Jon Landau Management, and one would be highly surprised if Springsteen or his current management are even aware of these releases. The cover of this disc features a strange clip art graphic of a '50s era couple and the disc is part of what's called "The Great Artist Best Hits." The sound quality is top rate and this disc is licensed by JASRAC, and is an official release, not a bootleg. Culture Records seems to be a repackaging label, not unlike our own K-Tel Records here in the US. The Van Halen tunes run from "Runnin' With the Devil" to "I'm the One" (or is that a Bruce song?).

Our Japanese sources report that like the Dylan/Bruce disc this CD was originally sold at a great discount but now is already out of print and hard to find. These discs are usually not found in major record stores but instead are stocked at Mom and Pop styled stores, though they have the official sanction of the Japanese copyright agency. Unlike the Dylan disc, however, this CD doesn't follow the regular pattern of one Bruce cut followed by one cut by the other artist — instead, the first four cuts are Van Halen, followed by five Bruce cuts, followed by four Van Halen cuts, and finally ending with three more Bruce cuts. Though it clearly is not the intention, the ultimate use of these discs may be as a prop in a stump-your-friends contest: Stick this CD in your player, start playing it, and bet your friends \$100 they can't guess the name of the disc playing. Considering the rarity of this disc already, unless your friends have visited Japan recently, you're looking at easy money.

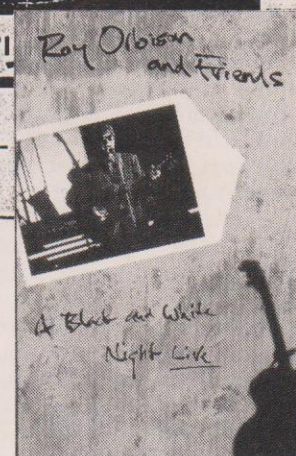
Though there have been no official Springsteen recordings released in the US this past quarter, Virgin has finally put out the Roy



Above: Bruce Springsteen and Van Halen on CD in Japan; right, Roy Orbison's great TV special is now out on official album.

Orbison collection *A Black and White Night Live*. This album is essentially the soundtrack recording to the previously released video of the same name and it features Springsteen as part of the stellar backing band that came together in 1987 for the recording of this show at the Coconut Grove in Los Angeles. Other stars in the band include Elvis Costello, Jackson Browne, Tom Waits and Bonnie Raitt, though Springsteen gets top billing and is the most prominent musician in the band. The first single release off the album was scheduled to be "Oh, Pretty Woman" which features Bruce on backing vocal. A video clip was also planned, cut from the special itself.

Though this material has been available on video for some time now — and the video is one of the best rock videos ever, with Hi-Fi audio — this audio release allows fans easier access to the music in the regular format. This album was released on vinyl, CD and cassette and the release marks the only commercially available live recording from the legendary Orbison. The liner notes to the album were written by Orbison's son and Orbison's widow Barbara is listed as executive producer, making this a family affair.



The Orbison release also represents a first in other ways. It is one of the first commercial recordings released in response to a bootleg CD. Not long after the release of the video, bootleggers in Europe issued a CD of the special with essentially the same material as this official release. Titled *A Black and White Night, Roy Orbison, in Concert with the Billion Dollar Band*, the disc proved popular enough that Virgin felt forced into releasing their own version of the special. Don't worry about confusing the two sets however — the bootleg features a vintage photo of Orbison from his rockabilly days and misspells the names of both T Bone Burnett ("T Boone Burnette") and k.d. lang ("K.D. Lange") on the cover of the disc. Virgin reportedly flipped out when they found out about the release and rushed together their package which, in terms of sound quality, does not dramatically improve upon the bootleg CD, even if the graphics are better and the names are spelled right.



BY ROBERT SANTELLI

(Greetings From Asbury Park is a regular column on the Jersey Shore scene by Robert Santelli. Santelli is a noted Jersey writer who worked with Max Weinberg on the classic *The Big Beat*. His latest book is *The Jersey Shore: A Travel and Pleasure Guide* published by East Woods Press.)

WHILE BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN continued to generate media attention this fall with more unannounced appearances and jams in clubs and at concerts, members of the E Street Band continued to work on a variety of solo projects.

Clarence Clemons has been the busiest E Streeter. CBS Records released his third album, *A Night with Mr. C*, after Clemons completed his commitment to Ringo and his All-Starr Band this summer. Clemons also set his acting career in motion again by filming at least one new episode of the TV series "Jake and the Fat Man." The Big Man also took time out to occasionally jam with the Grateful Dead, his second favorite band it seems.

Nils Lofgren also toured with Ringo last summer. Now that he's off the road, Lofgren is back at work on a new, still untitled solo album. Unfortunately, Lofgren does not yet have a recording contract as CBS has dropped him from their label. In addition to working in the studio, Lofgren will do selected live dates this fall and winter, mostly on the East Coast. He's scheduled to play the Stone Pony in Asbury Park sometime in December.

Max Weinberg is back on the college lecture circuit, picking up where he left off last spring. His popular presentation of what it was like to participate in the Amnesty International Human Rights Now! world tour in 1988 has received glowing reviews. Weinberg has also continued to perform in Killer Joe, his Louis Jordan-styled jump blues band.

Earlier this year Roy Bittan bought a Los Angeles recording studio, Crystal Sound. Although much of his time lately has been spent in Jersey, Bittan plans to work in the studio this winter and perhaps begin work on an instrumental solo album.

In addition to moving from the Jersey Shore to Nashville and recently getting married, Garry Tallent has continued his new career as a record producer. Currently Tallent is in the studio with the Nashville-based Thieves. On tap for Tallent next year are new recordings from Steve Forbert and Evan Johns, two groups he's previously produced.



Bruce and Nils do the Pony.

According to CBS Records, Patti Scialfa continues to work on her solo album. Springsteen and Scialfa spent parts of last spring recording songs in Los Angeles for the record. Still, the album's release date remains a mystery.

Danny Federici is in the midst of building a recording studio on a farm he bought in Colts Neck, a picturesque inland Jersey Shore town. Federici has also been writing songs, though he isn't certain they'll add up to a solo album.

Two new albums from Jersey Shore-linked acts are worth investigating. The Smithereens' latest on Enigma/Capitol Records, *Smithereens 11*, is a continuation of the band's blend of '60s and '80s guitar-heavy pop. The album title is a take-off of the Frank Sinatra-led Rat Pack movie *Ocean's 11*. Recommended cuts: "A Girl Like You," "Blue Period" (with Belinda Carlisle on backing vocals) and "Maria Elena," a tune inspired by Buddy Holly's widow.

Longtime Shore music fans might recall that in the early '80s the Smithereens played the Stone Pony practically once a week. They still play the club on occasion. According to drummer Dennis Diken, the band "hasn't ruled out a couple of warm-up gigs" perhaps at the Pony or some local colleges before embarking on a U.S. tour early next year.

James Deely and the Valiants also have a new album out, *Set the Night on Fire*. On their 1987 LP, *Beyond the Beaches*, Deely and his band concerned themselves with traditional, Springsteen-influenced Jersey Shore rock. But on *Set the Night on Fire*, Deely demonstrates that his vision as a songwriter extends beyond his Boss influences. On songs such as "Funk 48" and "Heartbreaker Blue," Deely digs into funk-driven soul and radio-ready pop, respectively.

"I'm always flattered, even honored, when someone says my sound is something like Springsteen's, or that someone can tell I've been influenced by him," said Deely. "He's the best, so that must mean something."

"But I didn't want to do a record that was just about Springsteen's kind of rock 'n' roll. On *Set the Night on Fire* there are funk songs, pop songs, country songs, and some straight ahead rock stuff. I tried to touch on all my influences."

With all the big-name rock groups that reunited in 1989, it was fitting that one of the Shore's most popular late-'70s bands, the Lord Gunner Group, should also re-form and enjoy one more night in the spotlight. That's what happened in September at the Stone Pony, much to the delight of longtime Lord Gunner fans.

From 1977 to 1983, the Lord Gunner Group, led by singer-guitarist Lance Larson and lead guitarist Ricky DeSarno, filled Shore clubs with its Asbury Park-style power rock and its striking original songs. Although Lord Gunner never recorded an album of its own, it was featured on the compilation LP, *The Sounds of Asbury Park*, released in 1981 and now a collector's item.

Lord Gunner knew how to pick its drummers. Original Gunner drummer Ernest "Boom" Carter also played drums in the E Street Band (he can be heard on the song "Born to Run"). So did, of course, Vini Lopez. Lopez replaced Carter in Lord Gunner and played the September Gunner reunion at the Pony. Lord Gunner's third drummer? Tico Torres, who now keeps the big beat for Bon Jovi.

Might Lord Gunner once again become a full-time performing band? "We'll have to see," Larson said. "We're keeping our options open so that anything is possible."

Shore tidbits... Skid Row's self-titled debut on Atlantic Records recently went double platinum plus with more than two and a half million copies sold. No other Shore band or artist has had such an explosive start, not even the Boss... T-Birds, a small Asbury Park club on Main Street, is rapidly becoming the place to play at the Shore these days. Although it's far smaller than the Pony, bands like its downtown Manhattan ambience — it was also recently the site of the *Backstreets* book release bash... One artist who's had success at T-Birds is Kevin "Bird" Connair, a country-flavored folksinger whose Shore roots extend back to the days of Upstage. Bird was also a member of the short-lived but legendary Springsteen band, Dr. Zoom and the Sonic Boom... Another folksinger raising a few eyebrows these days is Christine Kelly. Her material is steeped in politics and concerns for the homeless and women. You'll be hearing more about her... Longtime Shore vet Billy Chinnock has a new band and a new record deal. Described by Chinnock as "an American rock 'n' roll band," Billy & the Suns are currently in a Nashville recording studio. Atlantic hopes to release the album in February.

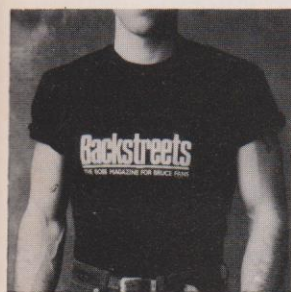
(James Deely's new release *Set the Night on Fire* is available for \$12 on CD or \$9 on cassette from Backstreet Records.)

t-shirts



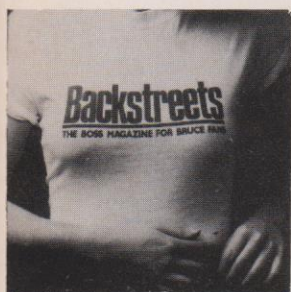
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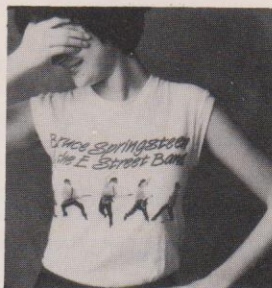
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'Yeah, it sounds like a Bruce song to me.'

HAVE YOU EVER LISTENED TO THE RADIO and heard a song you swore sounded like Bruce, but listened just long enough to find out it was actually Steve Earle, John Hiatt or the BoDeans? You've just entered the world of "The Bruce Influence." Over the past ten years there have been dozens of songs that attempt to sound just like Bruce, mirror his lyrical style, sound like tributes to him or simply show the unmistakable stamp of his influence. We asked you to send us your suggestions of songs that sounded like Bruce or show his influence. Your responses covered a wide range of artists, though certain names did pop up with frequency.

The trend is bound to continue, because this generation of new rock artists is the first who grew up listening to Springsteen. There is a fine line, however, between artists who write in Bruce's style, and those who seem to outright copy his lyrics and music. Beyond that, some artists have begun blatantly to borrow his onstage techniques. At this summer's Moscow Peace Festival, Jon Bon Jovi gave an impassioned speech about freedom, with keyboard accompaniment, that was a virtual replay of Bruce's "Spare Parts" story and his mid-show Amnesty speech. As for others like Steve Earle, we'll let you make the call. Below is a list of some of your suggestions and the reasons behind them. We haven't even heard of all the artists, but we will assume some of you have. We pulled five entries at random for Backstreets Staff T-shirts. The winners are: Mimi Chamberlin, Cincinnati, OH; Sean Cronin, Blastell, NY; James Ashby, Stafford, VA; Tricia Leon, Alexandria, VA; Tina Ratellff, Chillicothe, OH.

"Heaven is a Place on Earth," Belinda Carlisle. I was a little surprised that Bruce would give a song to Carlisle, but then who expected "Fire" from the Pointer Sisters. Then when I bought the record I was shocked to find the names Rick Nowels and Ellen Shipley. Could either of these writers be from Asbury, or, as I imagine, was it written as a (very good) rip off of a Springsteen. (Joyce Peters, Queensbury, NY)

"Walk of Life," Dire Straits. Kind of like "Working on the Highway" musically, with the main character "down in the tunnel trying to make it pay." A *Born in the USA* reject? (Suzanne Oliver, Shawnee, KS)

"It'll Be Easier in the Morning," Hothouse Flowers. Although sounding like a cross between U2 and Bruce, the first verse has Bruce written all over it in both sound and theme. (Jeffery Chimera, Jamestown, NY)

"Lover," Michael Stanley Band. I guess it's the sax and the line "Thank God for the man who put the white lines on the highway," but I can hear Bruce belting out "Ooh, lover." It's a Bruce song! (Theresa Kolk, Cleveland, OH)

"You're Only Lonely," J.D. Souther. Sort of reminds me of "Janey, Don't You Lose Heart." Not by the style or sound, but the

message. Could truly have been Bruce's brainchild. (Susan Jensen, Peekskill, NY)

"Scenes from an Italian Restaurant," Billy Joel. The theme of this song is very common to a majority of Bruce's. It talks of young love that didn't work out, of common people that we all went to school with: the king and queen of the prom. Another reason Bruce could have written this is because Billy tells a story along the lines of "Thunder Road," "Rosalita," "Sandy," etc. (Tina Bacha, Parma, OH)

"Tennessee Plates," John Hiatt. The song concerns a man who breaks into Graceland to steal one of Elvis' Cadillacs. Just the plot line alone brings to mind Bruce's love affair with Caddies, the influence Elvis had on Bruce and the time Bruce himself took a less than announced trip to Graceland. (James Ashby, Stafford, VA)

"Chicks and Cars (and the Third World War)," Colin James. It's pure Springsteen. Not only is it a fast rocker in the Springsteen mode, but it's about two of Bruce's favorite topics. No denying it, Colin has been listening to the little guy and writing and recording Springsteen-like songs, all in admiration of the "Prisoner of Rock 'n' Roll!" (Greg Reiser, Ottawa, ON)

"Wrecking Ball," Neil Young. The lyrics and feeling are like "Atlantic City." Neil: "Meet me at the wrecking ball, wrecking ball. Wear something pretty and white, and we'll go dancing tonight." Bruce: "Put your makeup

on, fix your hair up pretty, and meet me tonight in Atlantic City." (Tina R., Chillicothe, OH)

"Hand to Mouth," George Michael. Story telling very similar to *Nebraska* and *Born in the USA*, especially "Reason to Believe." (Flynn McLean, Ithaca, NY)

"I'm No Angel," Greg Allman. This song includes the line: "You can't start a fire without a spark." I mean, really, how much more obvious can you get. (Danny Mendal, Mountain Brook, AL)

"Jackie Brown," John Mellencamp. Could fit on *Nebraska*. I'll bet that he had "debts no honest man could pay." "Fast Car," Tracy Chapman. If the singer and Wendy (in "Born to Run") got married and settled down, they'd be singing this after a few years. (Cindy Swarich, Warren, MI)

"Nowhere to Go," The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band. Sounds like it could fit on the *Nebraska* LP with lyrics like: "One last look at my land, auctioneer with his gavel in hand, and he says, 'it's got to go.' Worked this piece all my life, broke my heart and it took my wife." (Bob Bobarsky, Old Saybrook, CT)

"The Way You Make Me Feel," Michael Jackson. The first verse makes me feel that the "Bad" one wants to "Ramrod." (Brian Anthony Smith, San Diego, CA)

Copperhead Road and *Exit O* LPs, Steve Earle. Blatant rip offs. (T. Whitaker, West Yorks, England)



Vini Lopez signs copies of *Backstreets, Springsteen: The Man and His Music* at the book release party in Asbury Park.

Book parties in four cities

TO MARK THE RELEASE OF THE NEW BOOK, *Backstreets, Springsteen: The Man and His Music*, Backstreets held parties in four cities across the nation for subscribers. The book's release was kicked off by a party in Asbury Park, N.J. with a capacity crowd filling T Birds Cafe. Subscribers came to that party from as far away as Florida and Boston and met such luminaries as Vini Lopez and Bob Alfano of the Castiles. Bruce Tramps also heard the sounds of the bands Jah Love and the Lance Larson Group.

The next stop on the party express was Philadelphia where an overflow crowd partied at the Cherry Street Tavern. The Philly party was filmed by the syndicated television show *Hard Copy* and appearances were made by legendary DJ Ed Siciaky and photographer Phil Ceccola.

The Chicago party was held at the Avalon Nightclub, formerly called the Quiet Knight and the site of Springsteen's 1973 Chicago show. That party featured subscribers from as far away as North Carolina, Michigan and Minnesota.

The Seattle release party was held at the Trolleyman Pub where a large crowd listened to Bruce tunes and sampled microbrewed beer.

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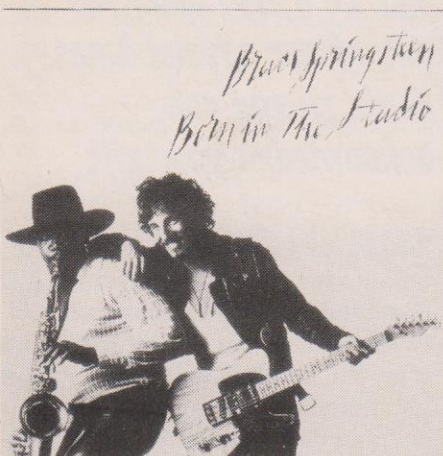
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Consumer reviews of current CDs

BY LYNN ELDER

For the benefit of our readers, *Backstreets* provides ratings of unauthorized releases currently in circulation. Don't write us asking where these can be obtained because we don't know and even if we did we wouldn't tell you since we do not wish to help those selling this illegal product make a profit. *Backstreets* in no manner, shape or form endorses these types of material. These reviews are provided by our columnist solely for informational purposes and to be perfectly honest our bottom line advice is that you'd be better off not spending so much money on products of this sort as over time legitimate collectibles have proven to be much more valuable and in demand. But despite those words, some collectors will still seek this material out and for those collectors, our reviews should help you steer clear of the real losers. Unauthorized CDs are growing in numbers and with that growth expect some real ripoffs — our word of advice is let the buyer beware and demand to listen to material before you buy it. Each title here has been rated for packaging, performance and sound quality on a scale of one to ten, one being downright awful and ten being the quality generally found in legitimate releases.



● **Born in the Studio**
(Archive Productions)

Packaging: 6
Sound Quality: 9
Performance: 9

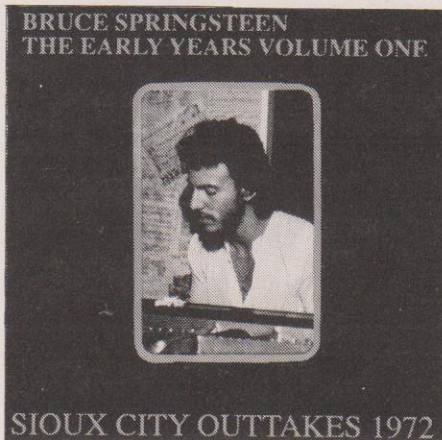
If you're looking for the exceptional sound quality that we expected would be found on boot CDs, this CD — along with *You Mean So Much to Me* — is one of the must buys. The material has been around forever, on best-selling bootlegs (*E Ticket*), and on tapes in collectors' hands, but though there are some tapes around that approach this quality, the sound here is exceptional and perfect for the CD format.

The material is essentially *Born to Run* outtakes. Alternative versions like the acoustic

"Thunder Road" cut rank as some of the most important alternative cuts in Bruce Springsteen's career. This track must be heard to really understand both sides of the song, the victory and the defeat. Some of the outtakes aren't all that different or represent Springsteen's early studio attempts and as such are not as polished or finished, but as a whole, this material is extraordinary and offers a rare opportunity to examine Springsteen's studio technique.

As for packaging, using the script cover artwork as a cover, the front of this package looks good and the inner fold pictures are a delight, but the song titles and their misspellings indicate that the care involved was less than might have been expected.

To sum up, this is an essential bootleg CD, ranking with the best in terms of sound if not material. Also this being a fairly common title in the US — with wholesale prices in the ballpark of a normal CD's retail cost — prices should be in the \$20 to \$30 range.



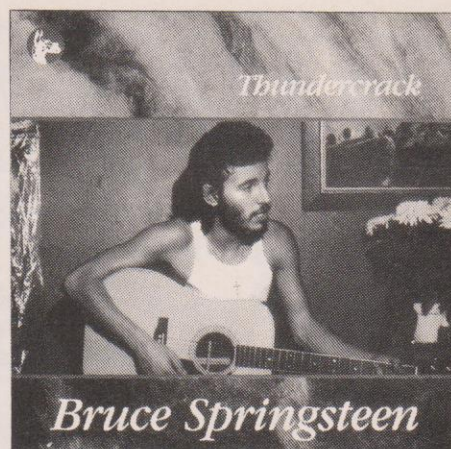
● **The Early Years, Vols. 1 and 2**
2 CDs (Bagel Boy Records)

Packaging: 1
Sound Quality: 2
Performance: 6

It's more than appropriate that this two-CD set includes the line "sold her soul to the bootlegger who would pay the highest price," because that sort of selling your soul to the devil is clearly the motivation for this set — it's another rip-off. The makers have extended one CD's worth of material of the early Hammond and Publishing demos over two CDs, all of it awful sounding, for the sole/soul purpose of making money.

As for packaging, songs are mislabeled, the co-producer's name is misspelled (!) and, to raise our ire, the entire liner notes have been completely lifted from the E Street Family Tree that appeared in *Backstreets*. That alone would be bad enough, but the scum who put this CD out chose to include their own typos and to use the early uncorrected version of the Family Tree, as opposed to the corrected version that appears in the recent *Backstreets* book.

This material is some of Springsteen's best ever. Even if you've yet to hear it, find the material from another source since this set is rotten to the core.



● **Thundercrack**

(Great Dane)

Packaging: 8
Sound Quality: 7
Performance: 7

Thundercrack gives us the chance to go back in time to April 24, 1973, at the Main Point near Philly, and experience the very early roots of the E Street Band. This was even before the first album had made a mark, so it's not surprising that much of the material is still being worked out — "New York City Serenade" is still called "New York Song" and features dramatically different lyrics, for example. Seven cuts are included, and the last three — "Santa Ana," "Tokyo" and "Thundercrack" may be one of the most powerful triplets of unreleased Springsteen ever played in concert.

The sound is very good, though a tad shy of excellent since there is a significant amount of hiss. But that's not bad considering how early this show is and it almost seems appropriate considering the intimate nature of the show. And intimate this CD is, as it shows a completely different side of Bruce Springsteen than his later work. Most of the arrangements are acoustic, and even when Bruce does rock out it's very subdued: Remember the Main Point was a folk coffeehouse that only sat a few hundred people, so the guitar solo on "Badlands" might have killed these folks. The packaging, featuring some pictures from the period on top of a beautiful marble background, is top rate.

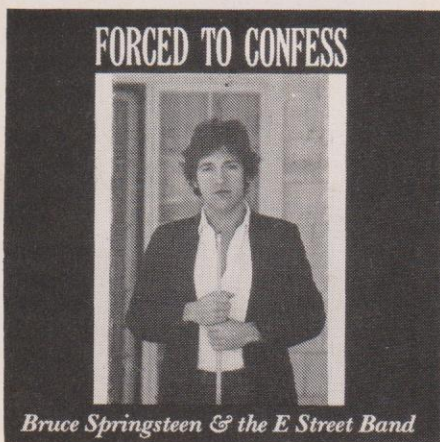
If you are a fan of Springsteen's early folkie period or appreciate these early songs, then this disc is worth finding. Don't pay too much though, since tapes and vinyl boots of this performance are plentiful and are not that inferior in terms of sound quality.

● **Steel Mill Live at the Matrix**
Vol. 1 and 2

2 CDs (Living Legend)
Packaging: 5
Sound Quality: 4
Performance: 7

This is the first release of Steel Mill yet on CD and the result is a mixed bag. The quality is certainly not excellent, though taken from a soundboard tape, but that's indicative of most of the existing recordings of Steel Mill. The

performance here does offer a good look at what the band was about: long, hard rocking songs that frequently drifted into extended instrumental solos. Lyrically, these songs recall some of the songs on *Greetings*, but more closely those used on his demos in 1972. The packaging is all black and silver, and though lacking in real photos, is much better designed than most of these discs and offers more complete info about the songs that should be a given for any CD. The other notable thing about the set is that the cover says it was recorded in 1969, though it is almost certainly from 1970. Perhaps this was an attempt by the bootleggers to fit under the 20-year Italian copyright restriction. Very strange, indeed, to have bootleggers fudging a year to become "legal."



● **Forced To Confess**

2 CDs (Great Dane)

Packaging: 8

Sound Quality: 7

Performance: 10

In 1977, during a period that was essentially downtime when Bruce Springsteen was still hassling with lawsuits and was not allowed to legally record, he put on a series of shows that some argue are his finest moment. His brief four-show stint at the Boston Music Hall during March of that year ended his official 1977 tour and in many ways ended an era when his on-stage performances were his only outlet for his passion. This CD is an audience recording of that final night, March 25, and this may be in the top five shows of his career.

The performance is exceptional, though if you're looking for sound quality on par with Great Dane's initial CD, *You Mean So Much To Me*, you won't find it here. The sound is very good but only equals the quality of known tapes rather than going beyond it. But if you're looking for a great Springsteen show in the convenient CD format, you couldn't find a better performance than this. A total of 18 songs are included, a third of which remain unreleased to this day. The Miami Horns were on the tour at this point and they never sounded better doing such tunes as "Little Latin Lupe Lu" and "You Can't Sit Down." The versions of "Don't Look Back" and "Action in the Streets" from this show are probably Bruce's best live versions of these unreleased gems.

The packaging is also top rate here and

shows the care taken by Great Dane on all their releases. The title would have to rank as one of the best for any Springsteen bootleg ever and it seems particularly appropriate considering the nature of this tour: Listening to this seminal show one almost gets the sense that Springsteen was forced to play to rid himself of the demons that were at his back door at the time. Let's be glad we have this record of one of his magnificent moments in the sun.

● **The Bosses Birthday Party**

3 CDs (no label)

Packaging: 6

Sound Quality: 8

Performance: 10

This three-disc set looks to be from the makers of the *Born in the Studio* CD. The discs are made from a soundboard tape of the Sept. 21, 1978 show at the Capitol Theater in Passaic, N.J. This was the show where Bruce celebrated his birthday and was greeted on stage by a giant cake from which a young woman jumped out, a scene pictured on the back of the set. The quality here is excellent without doubt, but it should be, as tapes of this show have always been excellent. An unfortunate trend among many of these discs is that they may faithfully reproduce the best tape of a show, but do nothing to improve upon it. In this instance, the set is quite hissy, something that should be easily corrected in the mastering process. Also the show is not complete, though the third disc has room for another half-hour of material. The packaging does have two photos from the show, but the rest of the package is unimpressive. "Because the Night" is listed as "Beware the Night" and the title to the disc itself is incorrect.



● **Darkness/River Outtakes**

2 CDs (Tunnel Records)

Packaging: 4

Sound Quality: 6

Performance: 9

This CD marks the first complete release of a tape that has circulated among collectors for the past few years as the "1979 CBS Demos," which was bootlegged on LP as *Son You May Kiss the Bride* and *The Electric Collection*. The title "1979 CBS Demos" implies that this tape was assembled as some sort of progress report to CBS on what Bruce was doing in the studio in '79. This is totally false; the tape was merely assembled by a major collector from various tapes of *Darkness* and *River* outtakes.

COMPLETE CURRENT CD RATINGS

Unauthorized Springsteen CDs are springing up like rabbits. Here's a quick rating guide of recent releases that have been reviewed by Backstreets contributors:

★★★★★

Born in the Studio

You Mean So Much to Me

★★★★

Agora Club, Cleveland Ohio

The Bosses Birthday Party

Forced to Confess

Live at Winterland

Oh, Boy

Summer Night

★★★

Laurel Canyon Demos

Live at the Bottom Line

Thundercrack

Tunnel of Lust

You Better Not Touch

★★

Darkness/River Outtakes

The Early Years, Vol. 1 & 2

Live at the Matrix, Vol. 1

★

At the Edge of Darkness

Live in Shoreline

Son You May Kiss the Bride

So, this wasn't ever officially demo material, but it certainly should have been. These 20 or so new songs are stunning, from the sheer pop brilliance of "I Wanna Be Where the Bands Are" to the riveting sadness of the alternative "Stolen Car," which by itself makes the entire set worthwhile. Many of the unreleased songs contain lyrics that Bruce saved and used in released tracks from both albums, making these outtakes almost alternative perspectives on these same ideas. As for the CD itself, it is an improvement over the unlistenable CD release of *Son You May Kiss the Bride*, and sounds for the most part very good, especially in terms of stereo separation, but is flawed by excessive hiss that should have been removed. The biggest problem with the set, showing the total stupidity of the bootlegger, is that the tracks are not indexed. That makes it impossible to skip from track to track without fast forwarding, nullifying one of the major benefits of CD technology. For that reason and meritless packaging, again filled with incorrect titles and crummy photos, this CD should be purchased only to gain the material itself.

(Continued on next page)

CD REVIEWS

(Continued from previous page)

● Agora Club, Cleveland Ohio

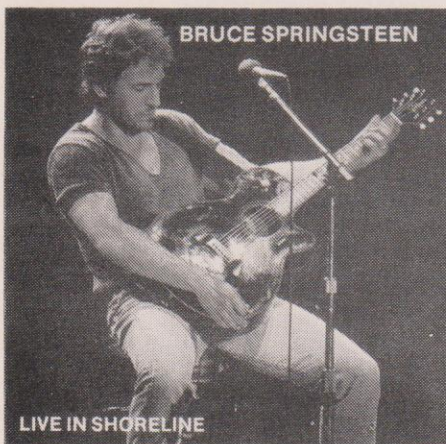
3 CDs (Tunnel Records)

Packaging: 3

Sound Quality: 9

Performance: 10

Another in the ever-growing list of three-CD soundboard sets from the *Darkness* tour. This set offers what's probably the best quality of the bunch, low on hiss and high in separation, and a show with some of the best stories ever, but the plaudits end there. Yes, the cover photo and type are negligible, but that could be overlooked if three other inexcusable mistakes weren't made. First, the discs themselves are blank, not listing the tracks contained within. Second, the discs are not indexed, making track-to-track movement impossible. And finally, the last three songs of the show are not included on a roomy third disc, despite common tapes containing those tunes. It's this kind of stupidity on the part of bootleggers that makes the whole enterprise disreputable.



● Live in Shoreline

(no label)

Packaging: 2

Sound Quality: 2

Performance: 8

This CD is the sort of crap that gives even bootleggers a bad name. There are numerous excellent audience tapes and even a soundboard tape of this show (not to mention a line feed video) floating around. Why these bootleggers picked an inferior audience recording to reproduce here shows their shoddiness. The sound is horrid, virtually unlistenable. And considering that a promotional record came out last year on World Hunger that had soundboard quality on a couple of these tunes, that's inexcusable. The packaging is as bad as the sound, ripping off a picture from *Rolling Stone*, the date of the performance is not listed, and, finally, the grammar of the title of the disc is atrocious (duh, it's Live "At" Shoreline — not "In" Shoreline). But the real rip-off here occurs when a consumer pays money for this dog. We hear rumor of a better quality CD in the works from this show and it would be hard to imagine anything much worse than this. 🐕

Cds

"Janey" on CD finally

ONE OF BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN'S MOST ACCLAIMED B-sides, "Janey, Don't You Lose Heart," finally made it onto compact disc this fall, leaving "Held Up Without a Gun," "Johnny Bye Bye" and "The Big Payback" as the only remaining commercially issued vinyl studio recordings yet to be found on CD.

"Janey" was originally recorded for the *Born in the USA* album, then was eventually rerecorded or remixed toward the end of the *Born in the USA* stadium tour and finally released in 1985 as the B-side to "I'm Goin' Down." It is the first official Bruce Springsteen recording to feature Nils Lofgren and has been a fan favorite ever since it briefly found its way into the Springsteen live show in 1985 at the LA Coliseum. The song reportedly was originally recorded by Stevie Nicks, though her version of the Springsteen-penned tune was never released.

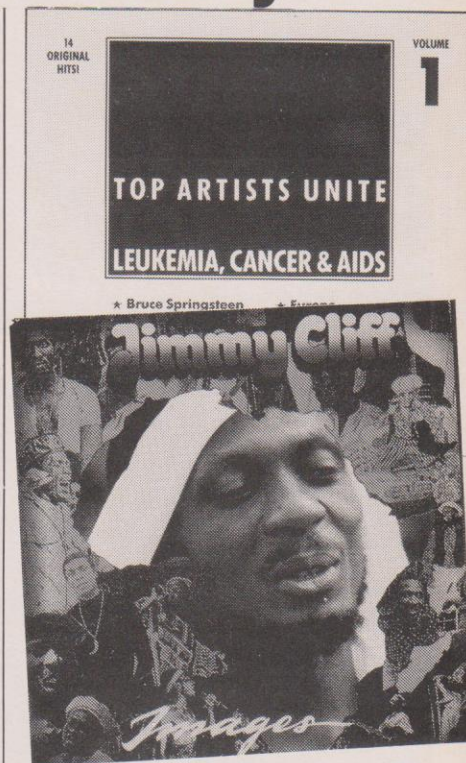
The song appears on the CD, album and cassette of a recently released compilation titled *Super Sessions Volume One*. The disc collects tunes from 14 different artists, from Springsteen to U2 to heavy metal maiden Lita Ford, and was put together to raise funds to fight leukemia, cancer and AIDS. The set raises funds for the T.J. Martell Foundation, the charity previously supported by the release of *Music for the Miracle*, a 1985 compilation that included Springsteen's "Cover Me."

While *Super Sessions* was available commercially, the song also appeared simultaneously on a CD titled *Gold and Platinum Volume Five*, issued by the CBS Record Compact Disc Club to members only. It features the same line-up as the *Super Sessions* set, though it does include a small picture of Springsteen on the cover unlike the *Sessions* set. The record club newsletter bills the set as including "the album debut of Bruce Springsteen's 'Janey, Don't You Lose Heart.'" The *Gold and Platinum* release benefits the same charity.

While "Janey" marks the hottest CD release, Rhino Records has also finally issued their popular *Cover Me* collection on disc and added two bonus tracks not on the LP — Greg Kihn's "For You" and "Rendezvous." The disc also marks the CD debut of Southside Johnny's great "Hearts of Stone" and Gary U.S. Bonds' "This Little Girl." The CD includes all cuts but one from the LP.

Speaking of Southside, Mercury Records finally plans a release early next year of several more Southside CDs including *The Jukes*, *Love is a Sacrifice* and *Reach Up and Touch the Sky*. This final title will be condensed to one disc, and at least one track will be deleted from the original double album. Southside fans may want to note that at least one of the Epic CDs has apparently gone out of print.

Back to Greg Kihn: If you miss *Cover Me* or are a fan of his music, Rhino has also just issued a compilation of Kihn's best material that includes the "For You" and "Rendezvous"



Above: The "Janey" CD and Jimmy Cliff's collection with "Trapped."

cuts. It's titled *The Best of Greg Kihn*.

And one more new CD will be of interest to Springsteen fans — a disc titled *Images* from Jimmy Cliff. This greatest hits collection compiles some of Cliff's best songs over the years and includes his version of "Trapped," the tune that Bruce Springsteen covered on the *We Are the World* album and turned into a concert favorite in 1981 and 1984. The cut shows how Springsteen took a relatively upbeat tune done to a reggae beat, and turned it into a powerhouse anthem of desolation and frustration. Cliff even thanks Springsteen on the disc's liner notes for recording his song and bringing it back into the public eye.

Springsteen fans may also be interested in a new album titled *A Tribute to Woody Guthrie* released by Warner Bros. The collection includes 27 cuts, mostly of other performers covering Guthrie songs, including performances from Bob Dylan, Joan Baez and others. The set is compiled from concerts at Carnegie Hall in 1968 and at the Hollywood Bowl in 1970, which might explain why Springsteen is not included.

Also new and of note: A band called Crazyhead have recently released an album titled *Desert Orchid* on EMI that includes a killer version of the Sonics' tune "Have Love, Will Travel." The song seems inspired as much by Springsteen's cover of this tune on the *Tunnel of Love Express Tour* as it was by the Northwest garage-flavored original, but in any case it rocks out. The song is also available on a promotion-only CD single. 🐕

Jeffrey Hatcher's Big Beat

BY STU REID

In the summer of 1975, critic Dave Marsh sent champagne backstage at New York's Bottom Line. The occasion was a week-long string of dates by Bruce Springsteen that turned out to be the most pivotal shows of Springsteen's career. Throughout the ensuing years of many fantastic nights with rock 'n' roll's greats, Marsh's enamored gesture was never repeated. That is, until October of 1987 at New York's Lone Star Cafe. The occasion for the bubbly this time being the New York debut of Canadian rockers, Jeffrey Hatcher and the Big Beat.

The summer of 1978 was when the rock 'n' roll bug really hit me hard and I claimed the noise my own — I would have sent champagne to anyone I could see in my hometown of Winnipeg. I discovered a cool university station that I listened to faithfully and my paper routes brought in enough cash to have a healthy stream of vinyl pouring into my bedroom weekly. Back in those very indiscriminating days it was AC/DC to Muddy Waters and everything in between. But my two faves that took precedence over all else were Bruce Springsteen and a local group called The Fuse. These days that local group call themselves Jeffrey Hatcher and the Big Beat.

It was March of 1976, the very first paying gig by what would eventually end up as the Big Beat. "The last time we were in town I came into possession of the 8-track tape recording of that night, which I thought had been lost forever," says Hatcher now. "At the top of the night I say 'here's the first of a hundred songs by Chuck Berry' 'cause there were — we did about twelve of 'em that night. Halfway through the third set it's 'Well, here's another lovely song by Chuck Berry for you' and you can hear some kid scream out 'They're all by Chuck Berry!'"

Twelve years later Chuck Berry songs are still a staple in the live set of this band. The lean, basic and sometimes embarrassingly innocent rock 'n' roll vision that Canada's Jeffrey Hatcher and the Big Beat started out with is still very evident on what may well be the most promising debut album of the '80s, *Cross Our Hearts*.

Originally released late in 1987 on the NY-based indie-label Upside, the record finally saw the light of day in their own country when CBS Canada re-released the LP in the fall of '88. The CBS version features three songs remixed with ex-Cars guitarist Elliot Easton, who volunteered his help after hearing and loving the original album. One of those tunes, "The Man Who Would Be King," made a brief run on the Canadian charts, but the just-released "Deliver Me" will be the first single to have the full CBS promotional machine behind it.

Since then, over a decade since the band began, the Hatcher's rock 'n' roll basement

dreams are finally becoming a reality. The three brothers along with bassist Susan Griffiths are doing the first serious touring the band has ever done (including major shows with John Hiatt and Steve Earle) and as a four-piece unit, the band's new audiences are seeing the tightest and most stripped down version of the band since its inception. A permanent keyboard player and a return to horns are the most immediate plans the band have, but more significantly, Jeff is again writing songs with his old soul mate David Briggs. "As far as I'm concerned, whether or not he's actually on stage, Dave will always be a part of this band."

American fans can look forward to the revamped *Cross Our Hearts* finding better distribution soon and album number two will definitely see international major label action soon after it's recorded this summer.

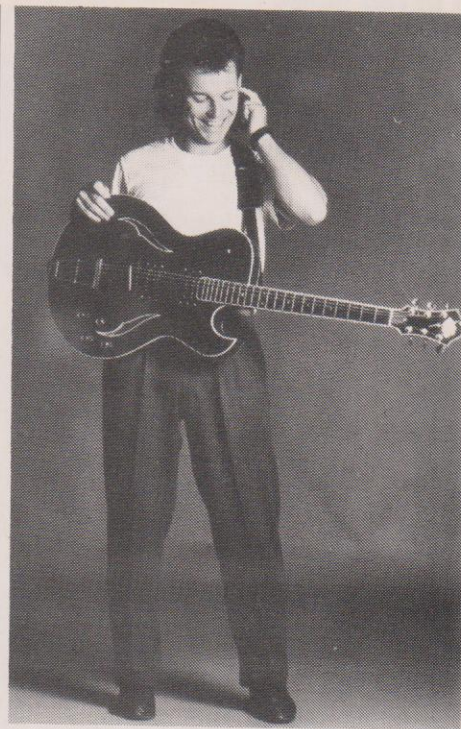
Although Jeffrey is responsible for writing and singing most of the songs, this band is truly a family affair. The nucleus of the Big Beat is actually made up of three Hatcher brothers — Jeff on guitar, Paul on drums, Don on guitar and saxophone, and all three vocally contributing to the most effecting mom-made harmonies since the Everly Brothers.

With an entirely natural fusing of country music and rhythm and blues, the Big Beat is easily today's greatest link to the gumbo chain encompassing Elvis, the Everlys, Gram Parsons, Otis Redding, Dobie Gray, Springsteen and John Mellencamp. This is a band that can twang through Merle Haggard's "Bottle Let Me Down," an obscure R&B gem like William Bell's "Everyday Will be like a Holiday," sandwich 'em between originals like the lonesome full moon wail of "Midnight Trains" or "Deliver Me" and never blink a stylistic eye.

"If you go as far back as Leadbelly," says Hatcher, "This is a blues guy playing folk songs. I just love those guys. I have a real soft spot for those black singers who have country in their sound — it's such a fantastic combination. Otis Redding had country all over him. When those guys do stuff that shows the country side of R&B I'm just in heaven. It's such an easy going, soulful thing."

From their early days the R&B simplicity of guitar, sax and keyboards has been the group's signature. But with today's media penchant for labels, the brothers find themselves being corralled in with a legion of string-tied "roots rock" bands they've got little in common with.

"Ever since the punk/new wave thing hit town in '77 and people started calling us this and calling us that I knew we were always going to be called something that didn't fit," Hatcher says. "And it occurred to me, 'Oh, now we're in show business.' Until then we were the local nobodys. But once people started bothering to misname what we did, then I knew we were finally off and away. It always seems that whatever they're calling bands with guitars this season then that's what they're gonna call us. We were punks in '77,



DAVID GAHR PHOTO

we were Winnipeg's New Wave sensation in '78, and when we started up in Toronto in '82 people wanted to know if we were a rockabilly act. Now this year we're roots rock, minimalist blue collar and all that stuff. I just call it what we do."

In the case of the Big Beat, what they do is only half the story. For a band that seems to be making its first appearance on the international music scene, the Hatcher brothers are already toting around volumes of history and it's in that history where the real magic of the Big Beat emerges.

Nineteen-seventy-eight was the year that Jeff, Paul, Don and the fourth brother, Dave Briggs, became deadly serious about being a working band. As The Fuse they released a self-financed EP, impressed and jammed with Elvis Costello one night in a Winnipeg pub, and soon became their hometown's "new wave" heroes. After breaking up a few times, the band minus lil' brother Don, relocated to Toronto in '82 and became The Six. Yet for all their persistence, the Toronto scene never really caught on and most live work they found was on repeated trips home to Winnipeg or the odd showcase in New York. A few doors had been opened in the Big Apple by a new found fan, Dave Marsh. The Six's '82 indie-album made a marked impression on Marsh and he raved about it in his *Rock & Roll Confidential* newsletter. "When we got fed up here in Toronto and went down to New York he was the only name that we had. So we called him up and became friends with him and Barbara Carr [Marsh's wife and Springsteen's publicist]. They put us on to all sorts of people that we've been in touch with ever since."

There's a line from an old Fuse song that goes "nice guys finish last and you're first in line." It should've happened long ago but for these nice guys this time the race is all but won. 🐾

DOING THE E STREET SHUFFLE?

Why Breaking up is hard to do

By Charles R. Cross

IT WAS A BREAKING NEWS STORY REPORTED WITH ALL THE FERVOR AND MELODRAMA THAT WOULD NORMALLY MARK SOME MAJOR NATIONAL AFFAIR — LIKE THE IRAN/CONTRA

SCANDAL. BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN DID/MIGHT/COULD/SHOULD/WOULD/DIDN'T/ WOULDN'T/COULDN'T "FIRE" THE E STREET BAND. AND, LIKE STORIES SURROUNDING WASHINGTON POLITICS, THE SOURCE — SPRINGSTEEN — WASN'T TALKING, SO REPORTERS ENDED UP RELYING ON RUMOR, STATEMENTS FROM PUBLICISTS, INTERVIEWS WITH THOSE AROUND THE SCENE, "INSIDERS," AND ON OTHER REPORTERS TO TELL THE STORY. UPON CLOSE EXAMINATION, THE actual facts of the event differ dramatically from what the ten-second soundbite that led most newscasts inferred. Here's the story as we have been able to piece it together from various sources.

Early in November Bruce Springsteen called up various members of the E Street Band and told them, in the words of Marilyn Laverty, Springsteen's publicist at Columbia Records, that they should "feel free to accept other offers." Laverty and her associates told several news reporters that the time frame involved probably meant the next year and covered the next album but that

with Springsteen no one could be sure.

Somehow the information had leaked to *People* magazine and to *Newsweek*, both of whom ran items on it during the week of November 13. *People* reported that "Bruce Springsteen has told the faithful members of his E Street Band, most of whom have been playing with him for 15 years, that he no longer wants to be their Boss." *People* went on to report that Springsteen said he won't use the band "on either his next album or concert tour." *Newsweek* reported that a spokesperson from Springsteen's camp said, "It seems to be in Bruce's mind that he's not planning to use the band on the next album."

That news quickly travelled around the news wires and soon the actual statement was dropped and the qualifying words "probably" were no longer reported. Several TV and radio stations informed their audience point blank that Bruce had fired the E Street Band. Words like "pink slip," "walking papers" and "giving them the heave ho" were reported by various media sources. Even when told that Bruce had not fired the band, several news sources refused to hear otherwise, one example being the syndicated television show *Hard Copy* which attended a *Backstreets* book party in Phila-

delphia, saying they were looking to do a story on the redevelopment of Asbury Park and on the new bands coming from the Shore area. *Hard Copy* interviewed several Springsteen fans and even sent a camera crew to Asbury Park, though when the show actually aired it ran the line "The Boss fires the E Street Band." No mention of the redevelopment of Asbury Park appeared in the story.

The *Hard Copy* treatment was typical of many news services who took the statement "feel free to pursue other projects" and translated it to "fired." E Street Band members all felt shell-shocked by the news fall-out and several attempted to correct the misimpressions. Garry Tallent appeared on WNEW radio in New York City during the height of the frenzy and told listeners that Bruce's phone call was basically stating the obvious. Tallent said that he was certain he'd be playing again with Bruce and when asked if there had been recent recordings done with the E Streeters he said "not really" and left the impression open that recording, touring, or involvement with Springsteen again could come at any moment.

When asked by the *Asbury Park Press* if he'd been fired, drummer Max Weinberg said "absolutely not. The concept of being fired doesn't even apply after almost two decades of working with Bruce." Weinberg said that he'd talked by phone with Springsteen "several times" over the past few weeks and that "nothing Bruce told me would indicate that the group of musicians known as the E Street Band is being disbanded."

Tallent also spoke with the *Press* and said, "what I've been hearing about the group and it being over isn't true. The stories sound like nothing but rumors to me."

As for working with other musicians on his next record, neither Weinberg nor Tallent expressed any surprise at that idea with Tallent telling the *Press*, "I would explore that possibility if I were Bruce. He's working on new ideas. He'd be a fool to limit himself by sticking with the same players he's been recording with for almost 20 years." Weinberg told the *Press*, "Bruce has a history of bringing in outside musicians to play on his records."

Those reports found some of the news media that had been so fast to jump on the "band is fired" story backtracking and writing stories the next day that clarified or contradicted their previous reports. The *Washington Post* quoted a CBS insider as saying that word of the demise of the band was premature. The *Post* reports the source as saying they "weren't 'fired.'"

Roy Bittan, who is normally one of the quiet members of the band, spoke to a *Backstreets* subscriber and said that the media had totally overblown the latest news. Bittan reconfirmed that Springsteen had simply told each band member to feel free to do whatever they wanted for the near future. Bittan said he felt the band was still on call, as always.

Clarence Clemons was one of the only E Streeters expressing surprise at the announcement. Clemons, in comments reported in the *New York Daily News*, described the news "as a complete surprise." Clemons had expressed his shock previously to other reporters and to some fans backstage at his shows in California. Clemons also told the *News* he had plans to play again with the Grateful Dead but for the moment was concentrating on a number of club dates he was playing around the nation as a solo act.

Though Springsteen's office wasn't talking, the husband of Springsteen's associate manager, Dave Marsh, was. In Chicago to promote his latest book, Marsh told a radio interviewer that he couldn't comment on the band story "because these guys are too close to me — they're friends." But he did say that Springsteen had already



done some recording with other musicians and that Marsh had heard some of the tracks. Marsh called them "a completely different direction" for Springsteen.

Details are still sketchy about the tracks but Springsteen's involvement in an upcoming Elvis tribute album has been widely reported. The *LA Times* reported that Springsteen had recorded a version of "Viva Las Vegas" last summer in Los Angeles with LA-based studio musicians. The cut was planned for an Elvis tribute album to be released in the UK. The *Washington Post* reported that the album was scheduled to come out in January to mark the 55th anniversary of Elvis' birth. According to several reports, Paul McCartney was one of the artists who spearheaded putting the album together and McCartney was donating his cut "It's Now or Never," an unreleased track from his Russian album. Another report had Cheap Trick giving their version of "Don't Be Cruel." Other artists on the record according to the *Post* were Elton John, the Police, Dire Straits, Duran Duran, Luther Vandross and Boy George. Though the record was being put together for European release it will most likely also find release here in the US. McCartney records for EMI in the UK and one report said that label was involved.

Springsteen has not even unofficially commented on the situation with the band and instead has spent much of

his time recently in Los Angeles, some of it at least around recording studios. He may or may not be working on a new record, and he may or may not be working on Patti Scialfa's long-delayed solo album. CBS still has no official release date scheduled for Scialfa's album. The Associated Press ran a report in November saying the record would be called *Storms* but chances are that this report had mixed information with reports that Scialfa had recorded several songs by Texas songwriter Nancy Griffith. Griffith's latest album is titled *Storms*. Griffith has said at several concerts that Scialfa had expressed interest in her material. Griffith did tell the *LA Times* that Springsteen and Scialfa had been interested in her songs and had recorded at least the song "Gulf Coast Highway."

As for solid Bruce Springsteen recording or touring news, at our press time there were few hard facts to report. What is clear from Springsteen's recording techniques over the past decade is that doing an album without the E Street Band would not mark such a dramatic departure for Springsteen. During the decade of the '80s Springsteen essentially recorded only one record with full band involvement, *Born in the USA*. *Nebraska* was a solo record and *Tunnel of Love* featured only selected involvement from the E Streeters. What also is clear from following years of Bruce Springsteen's studio habits, is

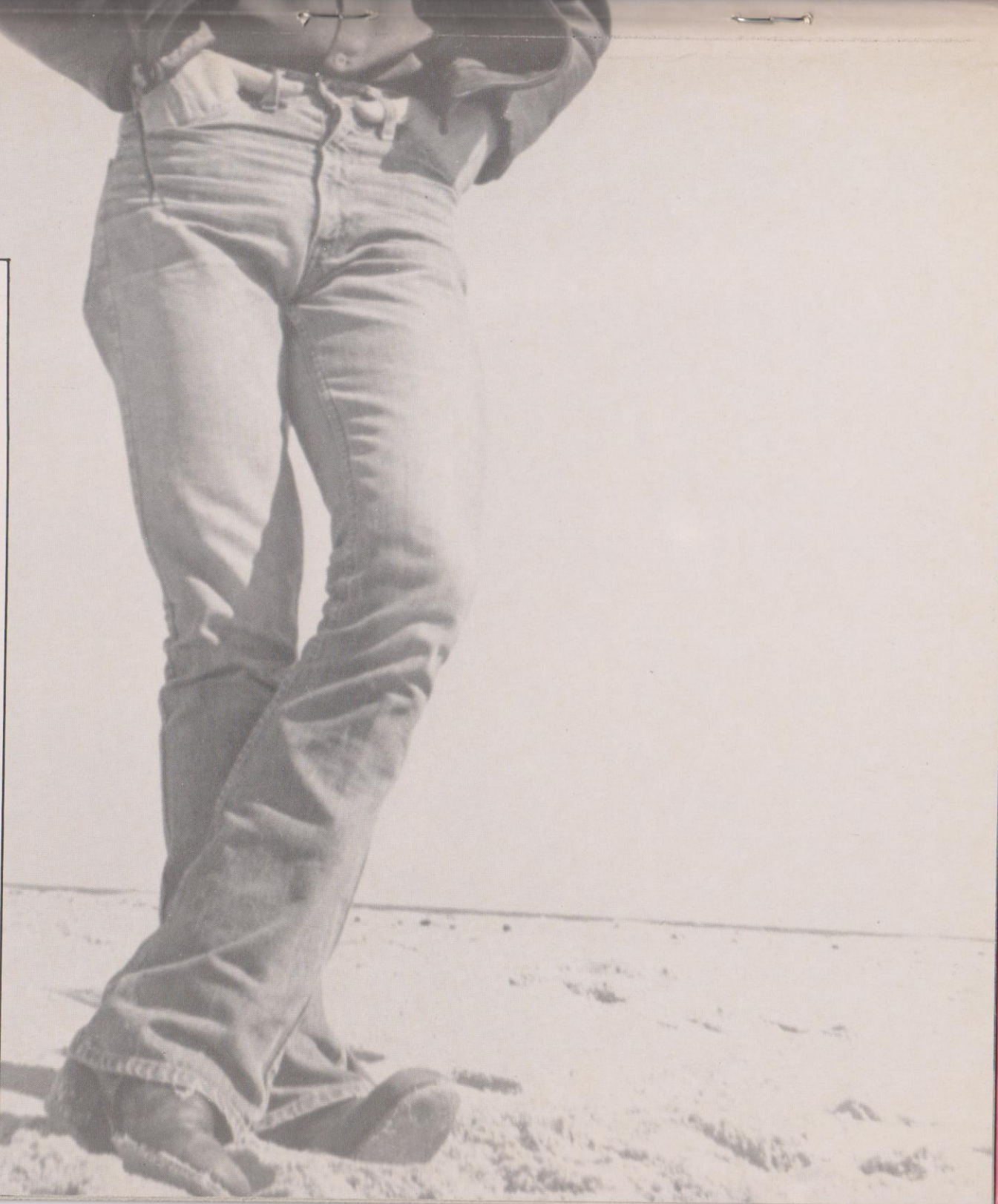
that things can change very fast and happen overnight when one is talking about Springsteen. *Nebraska* was literally recorded in two days' time and *Tunnel of Love* was also a very quick record.

As for touring without the E Street Band, that prospect is what has shocked most fans but remember Springsteen has done many solo guest spots over the past few years and two of his most successful shows recently were his acoustic appearance at the Bridge Benefit and his set at the S.O.S. Racism Rally in Paris, both concerts featuring limited E Street involvement. For Springsteen to do an acoustic solo tour would not come as a surprise to many longtime Bruce fans considering the nature of his material this decade and considering how many new options are available to Springsteen.

Max Weinberg is one of the biggest Bruce Springsteen fans you'll ever meet. Recently he told another Springsteen fan that whenever and wherever Bruce Springsteen calls he'll be there. And it's probably most appropriate to end this story with more of Weinberg's comments to the *Asbury Park Press*. When asked about the recording of "Viva Las Vegas" without E Street involvement, he said, "But that doesn't mean he won't use the band for future projects. And it definitely doesn't mean the band has broken up and will never play with Bruce again." Period. 🎸

RETURN OF THE NATIVE





*Interview by Mike Greenblatt,
September 23, 1978*

Photography by Bob Sorce/Pix Int'l

For his 40th birthday in 1989 Bruce Springsteen went out on the town and jammed at a local bar. That's not surprising but it's a far cry from the way he spent his birthday back in 1978 when he took time off from a busy touring schedule to drive around Asbury Park with a reporter from a local music paper. Contrast that with the past five years or so in which Springsteen has only granted a handful of interviews, most of those with TV stations capable of bringing mass exposure.

But in 1978 Springsteen was still very much a native of New Jersey which was why the *Aquarian* magazine called this interview "The Return of the Native." Music editor of the paper Mike Greenblatt has gone on to interview hundreds of other big rock stars but he still says he remembers best the day he drove around Asbury Park and Freehold with Springsteen. Springsteen showed up late for the interview but ended up spending hours with Greenblatt and photographer Bob Sorce, eating burgers with them and giving them his own tour of the Jersey Shore. And in the insightful interview that Greenblatt conducted between burger bites, Springsteen sounded off on his relationship with

Continued on next page ►

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Mike Appel, his early days at the Upstage and even admits — for one of the first times in print — that he was smoking a cigarette on the fateful day he first met Jon Landau outside a Boston club! Get ready to roll because you're going cruising with Bruce...

* * * * *

We've been sitting on a bench facing the ocean near the Casino Arena in Asbury Park. It's 45 minutes past our appointed meeting time with Bruce Springsteen and we're trying to light matches in the wind. It's past 1:30 now and we're wondering if he's going to show up. Hell, it's a beautiful sunny fall day, one of his few days off from a grueling whirlwind tour of the country. And it's his birthday to boot. Maybe he just ain't gonna show.

But we're determined. We're prepared to wait for two more hours. Then, if he's still not here, we'll split. We've already tired of scrutinizing all the faces for something that will tell us it's him in disguise. We forget our quest and go back to the matches.

"Hi," he says as he walks right up to us. "Sorry I'm late, I just got up." He's dressed in a blueish work-shirt and jeans. He has everpresent sunglasses on. We decide to break the ice over lunch.

Settling into a booth at the Convention Hall Coffee Shop, I order a BLT, photographer Sorce a cheeseburger, and Bruce a hamburger, french fries and coke.

"Yeah, we had a real rep," Bruce starts to say. "We could draw two, maybe three thousand people on any given night. We played our own concerts here and also down south. It's weird. Nobody would book us because we never did any Top-40. *Never*. We used to play all old soul stuff. Chuck Berry, just the things we liked. That's why we couldn't get booked. We made enough to eat though."

The waitresses are starting to mill about the table so Bruce puts his shades back on and hushes up his tone. "The other night was amazing," he whispers. "I went to see *Animal House*, and when I came out of the theater there was a whole bunch of people that started following me to the parking lot. I wound up signing autographs for over an hour.

"Anyway, after a while the kicks started to wear off and lot of the time we didn't make enough to eat. That's why I signed with Mike [Appel]. Anything was better than what was happening at the time."

Little did the local rocker know that this early signing with Appel would result in the latter claiming rights to the early material Springsteen had

written. The rest of the courtroom drama is famous. Perhaps generously, Bruce had nothing bad to say about his former manager.

"He did a lot of good for me at that time," he says, dipping one particularly long french fry into a mound of ketchup. "He introduced me to John Hammond [CBS bigwig responsible for signing Dylan, Aretha Franklin, Billie Holiday, Bessie Smith and others]. He helped me on that first album." He pauses as if he were ruminating on something. "I haven't seen him since that day.

"Actually, I was pretty shielded from the whole thing," he continues. "Mike put the onus on Jon [Landau], claiming he was the culprit."

I ask: You mean he charged Landau with stealing you away from him?

"Yeah, sort of. I was never much good at the business end of things."

Asked about the famous line Landau wrote for his *Real Paper* review ("I saw rock and roll future and its name is Bruce Springsteen"), Bruce says, "That line is misrepresentative of the whole review. It's funny. The review was nothing like that one line. It got taken out of context" — another myth shattered.

"I remember playing in a club where an earlier review that Jon wrote was splashed all over the outside wall. I was leaning against the wall, smoking a cigarette, when Jon practically bumped right into me. I had never met him. We hit it off right away."

When asked if he ever gave up during the long months of inactivity, Bruce still remains bright, completely devoid of bitterness. "I knew that it was just a matter of time. We were playing almost throughout that whole episode even though we weren't supposed to. I mean, what kind of law is it that is written specifically to stop a man from doing what he does to make his money?

"The only real frustrating thing which did cause me grief was the fact that my songs weren't my own. I didn't own my own songs. That hurt."

But that just makes it all the more satisfying now. At Nassau Coliseum, thousands of kids screamed their guts out for him before he even played a song. They didn't let up until he finished, drained and exhausted. At the Capitol Theatre, two nights before, he was surprised onstage by a giant birthday cake out of which a scantily clad girl bounced. He swears he didn't know a thing about it ("I even told John Scher no cakes"). At Madison Square Garden, 18,000 fans leaned on every note as if it were the last they would ever

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hear. A gala party was held for him in the plush Penn Plaza Club located deep inside the bowels of the Garden. Security was the tightest I'd ever witnessed.

We paid for the food and split for the beach. The conversation continued amid the sea, the wind and the hovering presence of the Casino Arena.

"I'm into a little photography myself," Bruce says as Sorce adjusts his light meter. "I took some pictures of Lynn [Lynn Goldsmith, photographer] that were published somewhere."

When asked about his other interests, Bruce talks of softball. "Yeah, we used to play hard. We had to stop, though, when Clarence and myself used to get too battered up. We'd go on stage all wracked up and it would *hurt*. After awhile, it got too important and too many people were into it. There's no softball on this tour. What else do I like? Hmmm, I'll tell ya... not too much besides music. Right now, music is it. I don't care about anything else."

We get back to talking of copy bands and the difference between making it with your own material and making good money playing copies. I tell Bruce I had to play "Shake Your Booty" to get booked anywhere.

"Shake Your Booty?" laughs Bruce, falling into the sand. "That's a great song. KC, man, he's great! He always comes out with those repetitive things. Over and over and over, that kind of stuff is great! It's like the 'Louie, Louie' of today."

Later on, in talking about what is written about him, he says, "I have Glen [Glen Brunman, CBS publicist] mail me everything that's written about me. Hundreds of things, man. I read them all at once. That way I can get a pretty good perspective on what my press is like, rather than reading one thing at a time."

"Near the end of *Darkness*, I wasn't doing any interviews," Bruce continues. "Then I did them until I noticed myself saying the same things to different people. There's only one answer to each question; you don't want to lie to these people. I really had myself in a spin. And each interview was a multiple interview situation with two or three people at once. I guess the problem was that I did too many of 'em."

Walking off the beach, we talk of the Garden shows and his stretcher routine, whereby he sings himself silly until he has to be taken off the stage in a stretcher, only to break free and grab the microphone again until he's forcibly restrained from the stage.

That's a great routine. Where'd you get that from? I ask. I know that professional wrestling has

a stretcher routine where the good guy gets beat so bad they have to carry him off in a stretcher and the bad guy always kicks him off of it as it passes by. It's a classic.

"No," answers Bruce, "I didn't even know about that. We got it from James Brown. He used to get himself so worked up that the bassist led him offstage wrapped in a cape. He'd throw the cape off his shoulders and come running back to the mikestand some two or three times. It drove 'em wild. So that's where we got the idea for the stretcher routine."

Sliding into the front seat of a borrowed '78 burnt yellow Camaro, Bruce at the wheel, we're on our way to the neighborhood where he grew up in Freehold. Shoving a cassette into the receptacle, he says, "A fan gave this to me outside a concert once. It's a real good tape."

He turns up the volume, guns the motor and shifts into second. We take off. He turns up the volume a little more and starts looking for "Hello Mary Lou" by Rick Nelson. "This song has one of the greatest guitar parts ever on it."

He can't find the tune and settles for oldies like "If You Wanna Be Happy For the Rest of Your Life (Never Make a Pretty Woman Your Wife)" and "Blue Suede Shoes." He shifts into third.

Now for the first time, we do not talk. The music is loud and damn appealing. The windows are down so the wind is whipping furiously into the car. He shifts into fourth and takes off.

We're rolling now. We settle uncomfortably behind a slow driver. He checks his rear-view mirror and roars past the driver. Seeing another slow-mover right ahead, he stays in the opposite lane and passes two in one fell swoop before settling comfortably back on the right. From the back, Sorce lets out a soft "Whew!"

It's a great moment. Chuck Berry is wailing out with "Maybelline." Bruce is going faster. It's such a fuckin' beautiful day. The wind is rushing in and Bruce is feeling good, snapping his fingers, clapping his hands and letting out with a hoarse vocal or two on the last line of each verse. "Hello Mary Lou" finally comes on and suddenly everything is crystallized in one magic moment — the speed, the music, the sun, the wind, the company. *Jeez Christ!* We're rolling down the highway with fuckin' Bruce Springsteen at the wheel! And he's driving the way you would think Bruce Springsteen would drive.

Later, when we reach a light, Bruce impatiently waits on it before saying, "This is what we used to call a 'quarterback sneak,'" and with that he takes off surreptitiously past the red light.

We're in the old neighborhood now. Bruce drives slowly down Institute Street until he reaches the right number. It's being painted now. "I lived here all through grammar school. There's a Nestle's factory near here. Man, when it rained we smelled that stuff all day long."

The elder Springsteen would go to work in the morning, come home, go to sleep, wake up, go to work, come home, go to sleep and wake up and go back to work at the factory. "I guess there was other things he wanted," Bruce reflects.

We get back into the car and drive over to the factory. "Both my grandfather and my father worked here. It used to be a rug mill in the old days, but for some reason it ran out of business fairly quick. I was pretty young at the time."

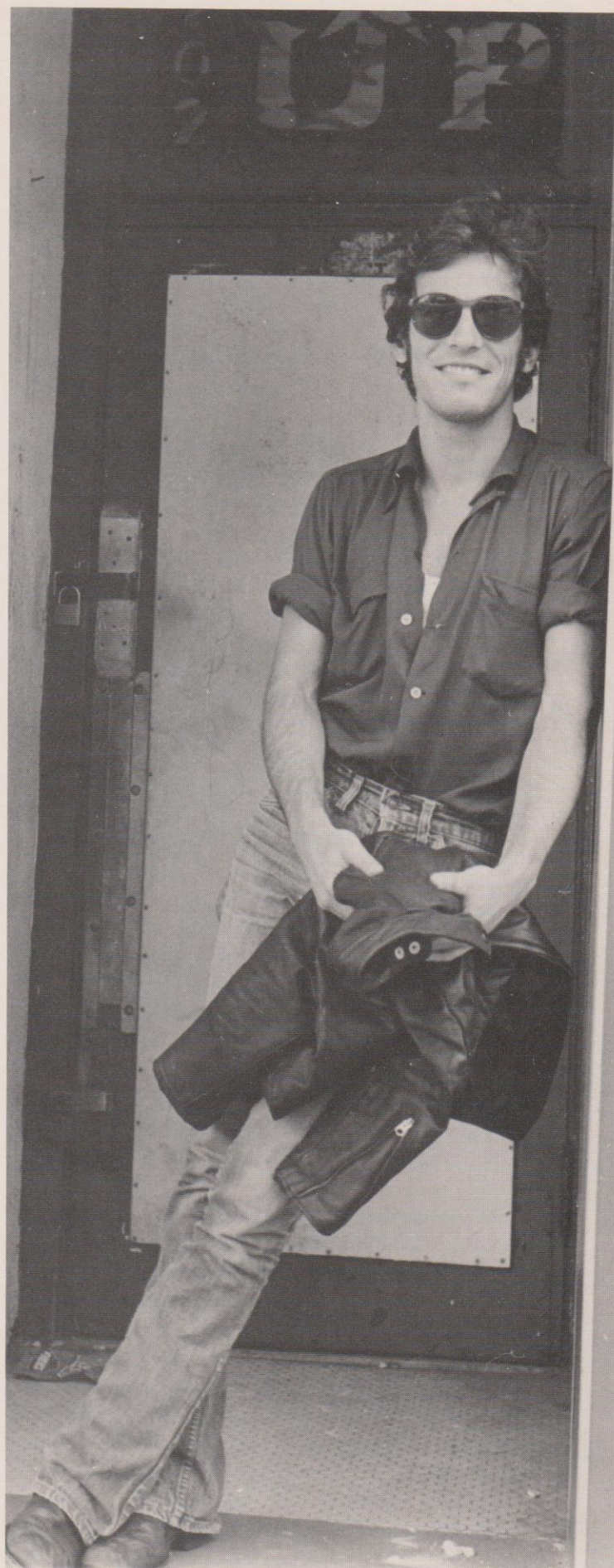
When I ask about high school, Bruce clams up. "It wasn't exactly the best time of my life because I didn't graduate with any of the others. It was a rough period." I could see he really doesn't want to pursue this avenue too long so I drop it. But I wonder what mystery is veiled beneath this wall of secrecy.

We get back into the car and tear out of there. Ironically enough, the tape Bruce shoves into the machine this time is an old Animals cassette. The first song could be a forerunner to much of the music Bruce writes. As the opening line comes out of the speakers, the dusty factory is just fading from view. . . . *"In this dirty old part of the city/Where the sun refuses to shine/People say that there ain't no use in trying/My little girl you're so young and pretty/And one thing I know is true/You'll be dead before your time is due, yes you will/See my daddy in bed at night/See his hair a' turnin' grey/He's been working and slaving his life away, yes he has."* The song is, of course, "We Gotta Get Out of this Place," and it was a fitting omen as we drove off.

As we drove, Bruce starts reminiscing. "Yeah, I lived in practically every single town around here, from Atlantic Highlands to Bradley Beach. We used to move quite often.

"That's where I had my very first gig," he laughs as we pass a mobile home setup. Looking out the window, the 10 or 20 mobile homes facing us look worn and old. "The gig wasn't bad. . . for our first job."

Hey Bruce, are you gonna show up at the Capitol again like you did last year on New Year's Eve? I ask him. It was announced earlier in the week that Southside Johnny & the Asbury Jukes would again party away the year in such grand fashion. Bruce turns round and answers, "I don't



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know where I'm gonna be on New Year's Eve.

"C'mon, I'll show you where my surfin' buddies used to live," he says, changing the subject. We swerve sharply off the highway onto an exit. "This used to be a surfboard factory," he says. We step out of the car near a small white building.

"Yeah, me and a fella named Tinker lived here for a year and a half, in one room. All the rest of this area used to be nothin' but sand dunes." He points to a huge expanse of stores, houses and construction. "None of this was here.

"They used to make the surfboards downstairs. Tinker and I, we had a ball. Just one room! Two beds, a fridge and a TV — the rest of the room was filled with surfboards.

"Since I was from Freehold, I was considered inland. All these guys used to surf every day. I was friends with 'em all but never went. Finally, they got to me. One afternoon they were merciless. They just kept taunting me and kidding me about not surfing that it just sorta got me riled. I grabbed a board and we all headed out to the beach.

"I must have been some sight surfing for the first time, but I'll tell you something — I got the hang of it pretty quick. Hell, it ain't harder than anything else. It's like riding a bike. I haven't surfed in awhile. Now that's something I'd love to do. As a matter of fact, I think I will."

He seems resolute.

He continues: "This guy Jesse taught me the finer points of surfing. We used to stay in North End Beach in Long Branch all the time. Some guy owned the beach so we had the use of it for almost two whole years. We'd be there every day. We'd stay on the beach, go in the water. It was great.

"This area is really amazing. There's really poor neighborhoods and then there's real nice neighborhoods all in a five-mile radius.

"I used to go to New York a lot back then. I played at the Cafe Wha? a lot in '68. I used to play there with Jerry Jeff Walker's old group, Circus Maximus. Let's see, I played the Night Owl (all these places were in the West Village). They had a lot of good bands there at the time — the Raves, Robin & the Hoods. Let's see, the Mothers of Invention were playing all the time in that area and so were the Fugs.

"I didn't go to too many concerts then. I much preferred playing and jamming with these people. There was a whole 'nother scene taking place over in the East Village that I wasn't a part of at all — the Fillmore, the Electric Circus. I think my first experience seeing a rock star was going to Steve Paul's Scene and seeing Johnny Winter. That was really something. I remember between sets, he

came out and sat at the very next table from me and my friends."

Let's go back to Asbury, I suggest.

Asking Bruce if he'd take me back to the old Upstage site where he held court almost every night, he gladly obliges and we get out of the car again in what could be termed downtown Asbury.

"I gotta be cool," Bruce chuckles. "I ran out of here without paying the rent."

We walk over to the site, which is upstairs from a shoe store.

"I lived here while *Greetings From Asbury Park* was being made. I slept in my sleeping bag on my friend's floor for a good portion of that album."

Bruce poses for pics while people pass by right and left. Surprisingly enough, nobody recognizes him (or if they do, they keep on walking).

"I'm lucky in that respect. What happened in the movies the other night is a rarity. Usually, I don't get recognized. I don't have that instantly recognizable feature that a lot of other people have."

Yeah, like Frampton's hair, I reply.

"My folks had already moved to California," Bruce remembers, "and I was out of high school by the time I got to Asbury.

"Upstage was a great place for us to play. We played here an awful lot."

In answering questions about his immediate future, Bruce says, "I have one more day off before we finish the tour. Then I have a whole month off before we start up again. In February we go back into the studio for work on the next album. I'm hoping it will be out by next summer."

Just for the record, the tour ended officially in Atlanta on Oct. 1. It started in Buffalo on May 23. The new tour starts (possibly in Jersey) on Nov. 1 and finishes by Dec. 20. If the time it took to cut *Darkness* is any indicator, then number five will be lucky to hit the stands by the summer after next.

The just-finished tour took in 70 cities and 86 shows in four months and eight days. That's why Bruce has to be listed as a "great guy" to do up an afternoon on one of his rare days off. Another highly impressive thing is that he spent the whole day without the protective cradle of a publicist's presence. Rarely have I done an interview without the artist's publicist in tow.

In talking about the current LP, Bruce says, "The guy who took the cover shot for that album is a friend of mine from south Jersey who works full-time in a meat market. The shots were taken at his house. He's a great photographer."

Bruce's only comment about the self-destructive syndrome (dope-money-power) affecting so many

rock stars is that "they let all the other things become more important than playing. Playing is the important thing. Once you forget that, you've had it."

Bruce, obviously, hasn't forgotten that. He's been having *fun* with music since the start. Bruce Springsteen is the perfect assimilator of many styles — Chuck Berry/Stones/Elvis/Buddy Holly/Dylan/Little Richard/Animals. His image on stage is also an amalgamation of many images — Elvis/young Brando/James Dean. Somehow he melds all of these influences into one cohesive framework for his own strikingly original material. The man is all that he has devoured musically from the time he started listening to music, and it all pours out of him every time he steps on stage. "That Elvis, man," Bruce says, "he is all there is. There ain't no more. Everything starts and ends with him. He wrote the book. He is everything to do and not to do in the business."

If Elvis Presley is Bruce's prototype then Bruce, himself, is the focus for a lot of current envy and speculation. We all have fantasies — Bruce included — of making it big and living as stars. Well, Bruce is living the ultimate realization of that fantasy right now. He's made it through all the bullshit inherent in such a proposition. *He's doing it.* And doing it in style.

Yet if you talk to him, he's quite humble. Ask him what part he played in the writing of "Because the Night" and he'll tell you that he only wrote the title line (although he admits he will probably put it on his next album).

Seeing him so close up and listening to him speak makes one realize that, although not articulate, there is a certain aura about him. A certain intangible. His charisma is the well-worn personality of the working man. His handsome/beautiful face could even make the transition to the silver screen as a prophet of the proletariat. His facial features are tough, there's a certain hardness to him. You'd swear he's Italian before you're told he's of Dutch descent.

His enthusiasm is real. The moment when Gary U.S. Bonds came over the car speakers with "Quarter to Three" — that's when Bruce really started to groove. The song is his encore in most of his performances. He still loves the original and still sings along with it when it comes on.

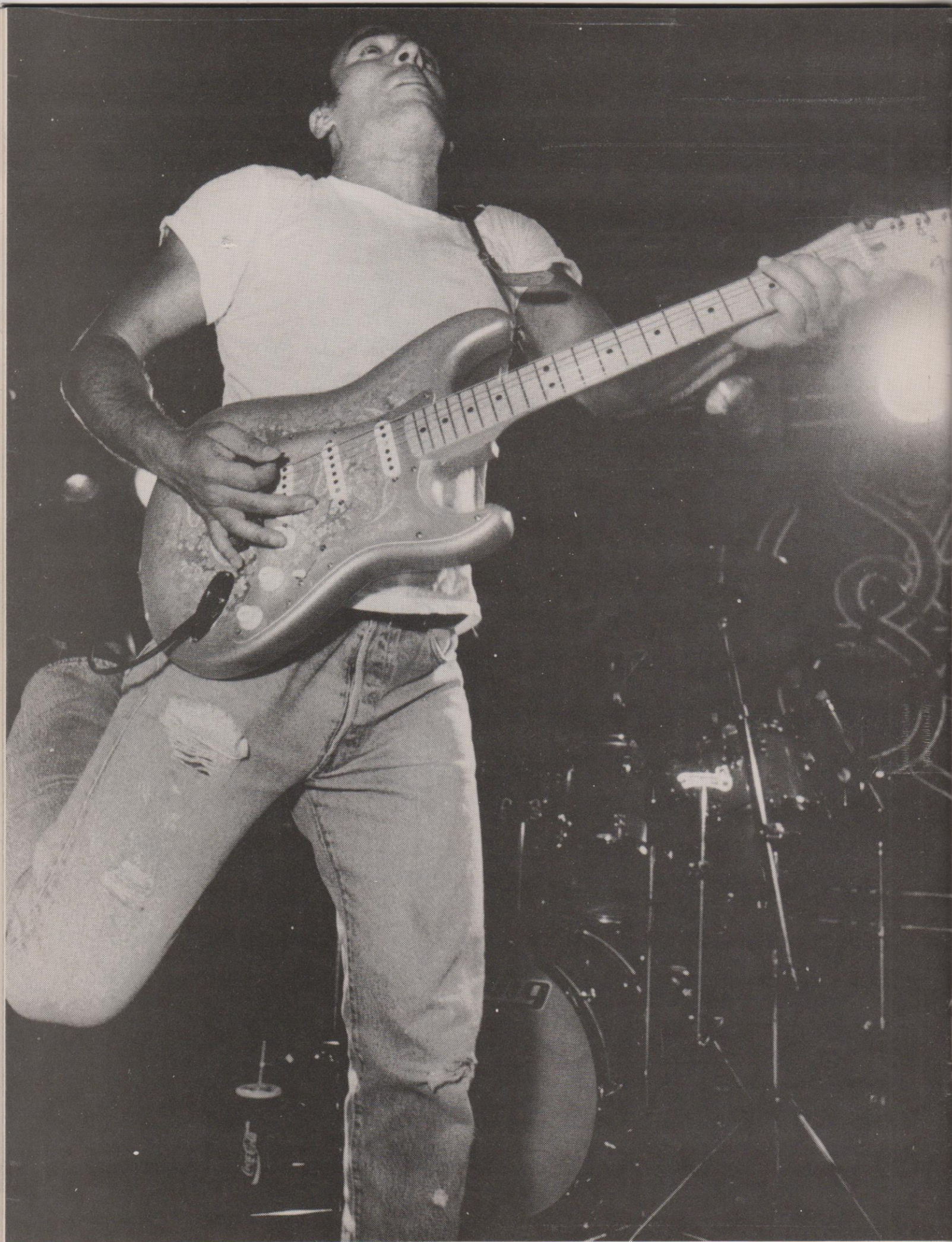
The essence of rock and roll can be distilled into a performance that a fella by the name of Bobby Lewis did on American Bandstand many years ago. Lewis performed "Tossin' and Turnin'" on the show, lip-synched it, and drove the small television studio crazy with his slips and slides. Host



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Dick Clark did a never-before-done-thing — he, in his madness of the moment, screamed for Lewis to perform the same song again. The sound man cued it up and Lewis went back out onto the stage and really tore into it this time, twisting, turning, giving it all he had. By now his lip motions were completely out-of-synch with the record being played, but it didn't matter. It was a piece of rock and roll heaven. And one, I'm sure, Bruce Springsteen would have enjoyed. 🍷

(This article originally appeared in the Aquarian in 1978 and is reproduced with permission. The Aquarian is now called the East Coast Rocker and still covers the Jersey Shore music scene in addition to the New York metro area.)



GUITAR ATTACK

Jersey Shore's Greatest Axemen

By Robert Santelli

Behind every great American rock scene has been a core of guitarists who helped define that scene's sound. The Asbury Park music scene is no exception. As far back as the early '60s, Asbury Park-based guitar players were the ones who formed the groups, led the jams in clubs such as the Upstage, the Student Prince, and the Stone Pony, and gave the music emanating from the scene its own identity.

Almost from the beginning, Asbury Park guitarists were influenced by rhythm and blues, soul, and English blues-rock. It's no surprise then that the Sound of Asbury Park, dubbed SOAP in the mid-'70s, possessed elements of all three music forms.

Of course not every guitarist with links to Asbury Park and its music scene played riffs and solos steeped in black music and English-styled blues. In the '80s, for instance, a number of prominent area guitarists explored heavy metal, pop, and punk paths. Bon Jovi's Richie Sambora and Ozzy Osbourne's Zak Wylant, have Jersey Shore music roots, but neither could ever be mistaken for a guitarist influenced by, say, Steve Cropper or B.B. King.

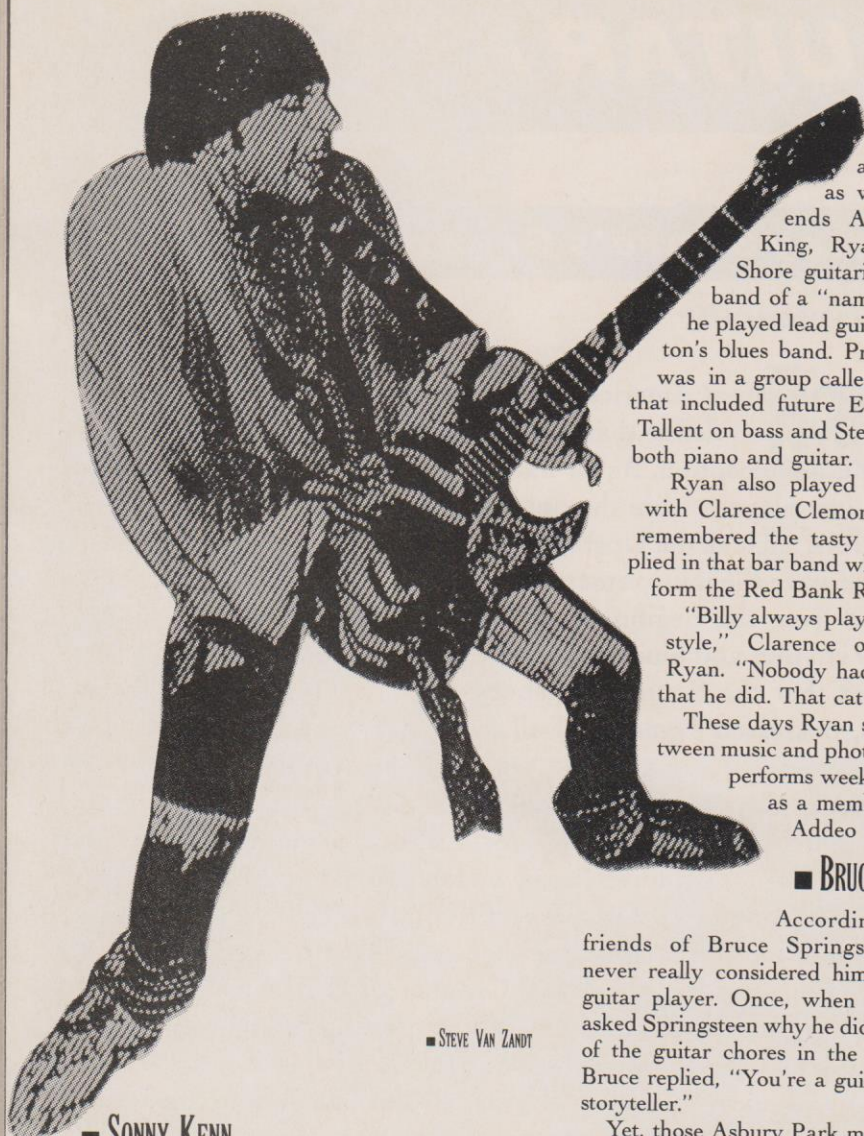
Guitarists Jim Babjek and Pat NiDizio of the Smithereens were Stone Pony regulars in the early '80s. Yet it's obvious that their roots are laced with early Union Jack rock strains. Their sound extends back to the mid-'60s guitar sounds of the Who's Pete Townshend, the Kinks' Dave Davies, and the Beatles' George Harrison.

Despite this, a large number of Asbury Park guitarists drew inspiration from black music, and when they exchanged ideas during late night jam sessions, something the scene was always known for, a particular guitar sound developed. Accented by blues-flavored solos and clipped, clean rhythm passages, the Asbury Park guitar sound filled area clubs and helped bring international attention to the scene, especially in the mid-'70s.

Today the Asbury Park music scene is more diverse than ever before. As a result, the traditional Asbury Park sound is but one small element in a scene that's so layered it's difficult to determine where it's headed. Pop, mainstream metal, and roots rock bands compete with alternative rock, reggae, post-modern, post-punk, dance, and blues-rock bands for gigs, fan support and media attention. The old days of one scene, one sound are gone, probably forever.

Who were the guitarists who helped create the Asbury Park Sound? Ten come to mind immediately, although there were undoubtedly others. These players not only contributed to the Asbury Park Sound in the years 1964- 1984, but as individual musicians they stood out above others for their skill, innovation, and ability to influence.

They are:



■ STEVE VAN ZANDT

■ SONNY KENN

The Jersey Shore's most influential rock guitarist in the early- and mid-'60s, Sonny Kenn paved the path many of the area's future guitarists would follow. Kenn's band, Sonny and the Starfires, which also included a dynamic young drummer named Vini Lopez, was the area's most popular rock band. Whether they played teen clubs, shopping malls or dances, young Shore guitarists would come to hear Sonny play.

"He was totally magical," recalls guitarist Ricky DeSarno. "There was something about his style that everyone wanted to copy, but couldn't. Back in the early days, nobody could touch him."

Kenn developed his guitar style by listening intently to records that featured pioneering rock guitarists Link Wray, Chuck Berry, and Lonnie Mack. Never one to overplay a solo, Kenn's guitarwork fueled the Starfires and provided most of their rock power.

"We wore gold lame suits and fancy boots, and had Ampeg and Fender amplifiers," recalled Kenn years ago in an interview. "How could we go wrong?"

■ BILLY RYAN

If Sonny Kenn was the Shore's most influential guitarist, Billy Ryan was the area's first

star player. Inspired by jazzmen Wes Montgomery and Johnny Smith as well as blues legends Albert and B.B. King, Ryan was the first Shore guitarist to play in the band of a "name" artist. In 1971 he played lead guitar in James Cotton's blues band. Prior to that Ryan was in a group called the Jaywalkers that included future E Streeters Garry Tallent on bass and Steve Van Zandt on both piano and guitar.

Ryan also played in Joyful Noise with Clarence Clemons. The Big Man remembered the tasty licks Ryan supplied in that bar band when he decided to form the Red Bank Rockers.

"Billy always played with plenty of style," Clarence once said about Ryan. "Nobody had the smoothness that he did. That cat could play."

These days Ryan splits his time between music and photography. He still performs weekly in Shore clubs as a member of the Nicky Addeo Band.

■ BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN

According to longtime friends of Bruce Springsteen, the Boss never really considered himself a stand-out guitar player. Once, when Ricky DeSarno asked Springsteen why he didn't assume more of the guitar chores in the E Street Band, Bruce replied, "You're a guitar player. I'm a storyteller."

Yet, those Asbury Park musicians who recall the golden days of the Upstage in the late-'60s say Springsteen was the club's top stylist, if not its best player overall.

"I remember him and his gold Les Paul," continued DeSarno. "He'd play Jeff Beck's 'Rock My Plimsoul' and it would be unbelievable. Everyone wanted to play with Bruce."

At the time Springsteen was listening to Eric Clapton, Jimmy Page, and Jeff Beck — all English blues guitarists — and Americans Jimi Hendrix, Steve Cropper, and Mike Bloomfield. Springsteen's guitar solos in Child and Steel Mill, two pre-E Street Band outfits, revealed both emotional intensity and a raw, uncompromising power that had a major effect on area guitarists.

Unfortunately, as Springsteen became more concerned with songwriting and more involved as a singer and frontman, he placed less emphasis on his guitar playing. There are some truly classic guitar riffs on *Greetings from Asbury Park, N.J.* and *The Wild, the Innocent and the E Street Shuffle*, but for Springsteen guitar fans, there wasn't enough. Later, when Steve Van Zandt (and still later Nils Lofgren) joined the E Street Band as its second guitarist, Springsteen further lessened his guitar presence. Happily on the *Tunnel* tour Springsteen seemed to reassert his presence on songs like "She's the One" and "You Can Look."

■ STEVE VAN ZANDT

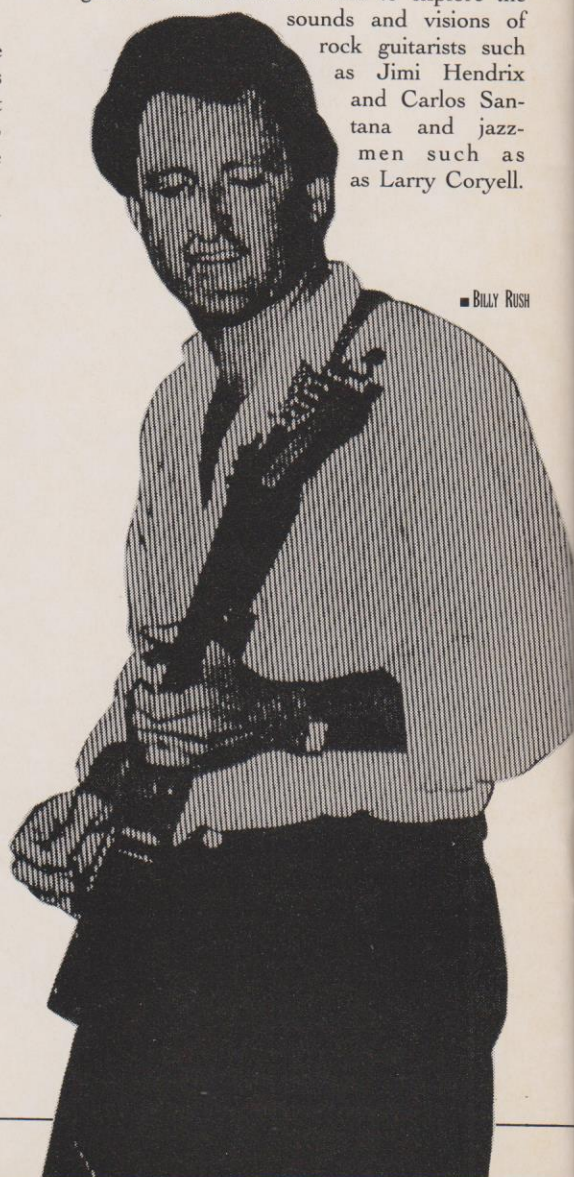
In the late-'60s it seemed as if Steve Van Zandt could play any instrument he picked up. He played keyboards and rhythm guitar in the Jaywalkers. He played bass in Steel Mill. He played lead guitar in the Blackberry Boogie Band and in the Asbury Jukes. He, of course, also played lead and rhythm guitar in the E Street Band.

Van Zandt's deep interest in soul and rhythm and blues enabled him to develop a guitar style that was economical and precise — two traits found in all great soul guitar players, especially those from Memphis and Detroit. Yet Van Zandt's guitar style was so rich in texture and tone that both his solos and rhythm guitar work demanded considerable attention. He was a valuable asset in any band he played in.

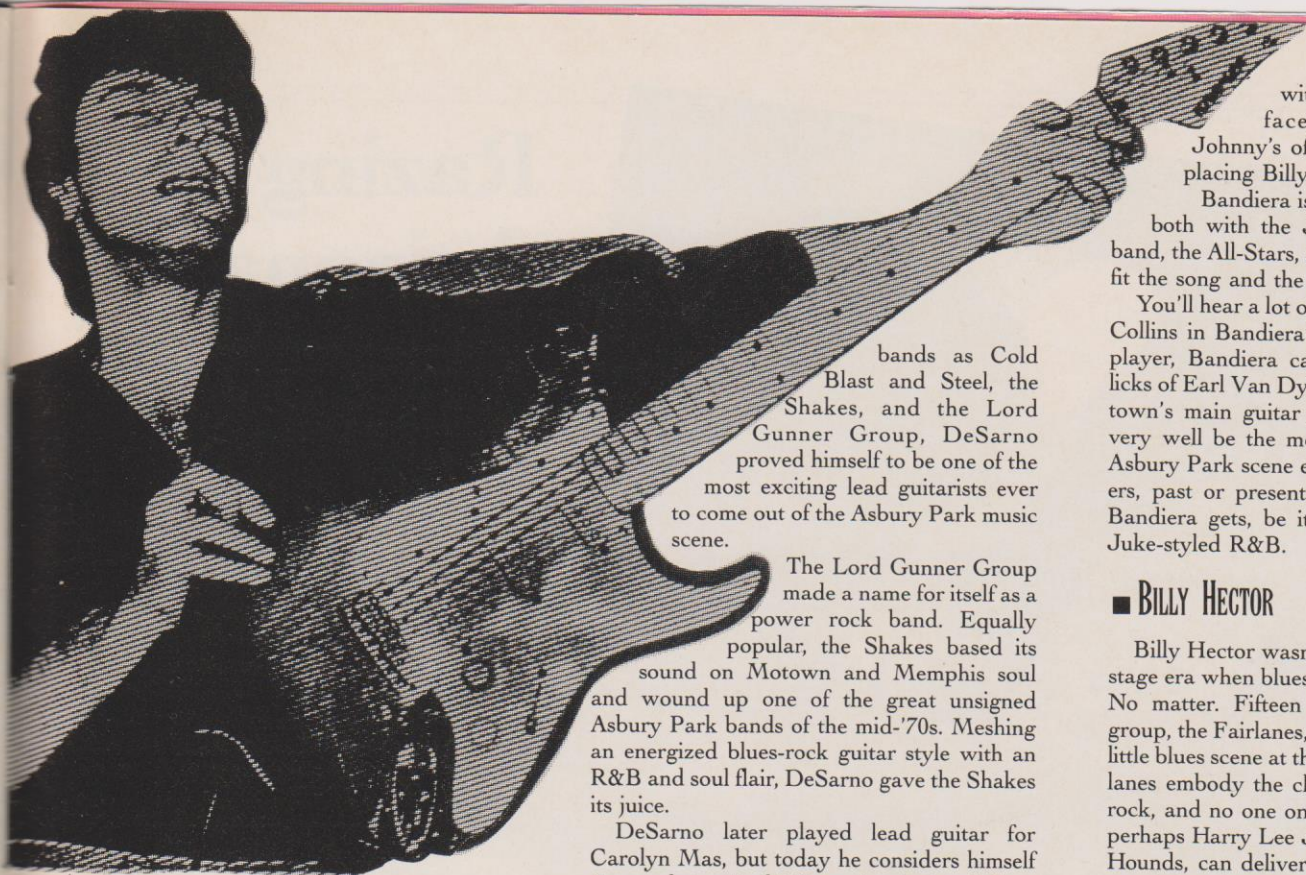
■ DAVID SANCIOUS

Most people know David Sancious for his great skill as a keyboard player. But Sancious was as good — if not better — as a guitarist, especially in the late '60s and early '70s, when his presence in the Asbury Park music scene was a large, widely respected one.

Sancious's insatiable appetite for new, progressive rock ideas led him to explore the sounds and visions of rock guitarists such as Jimi Hendrix and Carlos Santana and jazzmen such as Larry Coryell.



■ BILLY RUSH



■ BOBBY BANDIERA

Far from imitating them, Sancious used their inspiration to create his own guitar style. In it you could hear elements of rock, jazz, and blues. The manner in which he fused the notes together and created solos made it easy to hear classical music overtones in his playing, something that carried over whenever he performed at the piano.

■ BILL CHINNOCK

Bill Chinnock's two loves were the blues and rhythm and blues, although as a guitarist during the Upstage era he didn't stand out like the others did. It wasn't until later on, after he had woodshedded in Maine and developed a riveting R&B guitar sound, that Chinnock's guitar talents surfaced. On the LP *Badlands*, his debut for Atlantic Records in the late '70s, and in the seemingly endless number of shows he and his backup band performed throughout the Northeast in those years, Chinnock became a first-rate lead and rhythm player. His frequent performances at the Stone Pony and the Fast Lane, another prominent Asbury Park club, helped convince more than one Shore guitarist to adopt a bluesy, R&B-laced guitar sound.

Now that Chinnock has a new band, Billy & the Suns, a new record contract with Atlantic Records, and a new album due out in February, expect to hear more from him, guitar-wise, than we've heard in the past few years.

■ RICKY DeSARNO

Ricky DeSarno began as a guitar-playing folksinger, but after Southside Johnny turned him on to Eric Clapton and Cream, he turned with a passion to blues-rock. In such '70s bar

bands as Cold Blast and Steel, the Shakes, and the Lord Gunner Group, DeSarno proved himself to be one of the most exciting lead guitarists ever to come out of the Asbury Park music scene.

The Lord Gunner Group made a name for itself as a power rock band. Equally popular, the Shakes based its sound on Motown and Memphis soul and wound up one of the great unsigned Asbury Park bands of the mid-'70s. Meshing an energized blues-rock guitar style with an R&B and soul flair, DeSarno gave the Shakes its juice.

DeSarno later played lead guitar for Carolyn Mas, but today he considers himself "somewhat retired." Recently, the Lord Gunner Group re-united for one night at the Pony. (See Greetings from Asbury Park, N.J. on page 10.) DeSarno, said fans of the band, played lead guitar with the same commitment to detail and overall dexterity that he possessed when he was a full-time musician.

■ BILLY RUSH

Billy Rush assumed all the guitar chores for Southside Johnny and the Asbury Jukes after Steve Van Zandt joined the E Street Band. Although his guitarwork was not as defined as others, he nonetheless demonstrated how rock and R&B guitar styles could be blended into one cohesive force.

Rush's soaring solos soon became a Jukes' trademark. His best moments as a recording guitarist occurred on such albums as *The Jukes* and *Love is a Sacrifice*. But Rush's biggest guitar contribution to the Asbury Park scene was the way in which he worked with a horn section. Rather than compete with the Jukes' Miami Horns, Rush often sought to embellish it with full-bodied riffs and tight, crisp solos. Amazingly, Rush's guitar work found an important place amid all the other sounds blaring from the stage during a Jukes' concert.

■ BOBBY BANDIERA

Bobby Bandiera might have taken Steve Van Zandt's place in the E Street Band. He was considered by Springsteen for the position, and he certainly had the chops. Springsteen, of course, chose Nils Lofgren. And Bandiera, after spending years playing the Shore club circuit

with Cats on a Smooth Surface, accepted Southside Johnny's offer to join the Jukes, replacing Billy Rush.

Bandiera is a guitar stylist; his solos, both with the Jukes and with his own band, the All-Stars, always seemed tailored to fit the song and the circumstances.

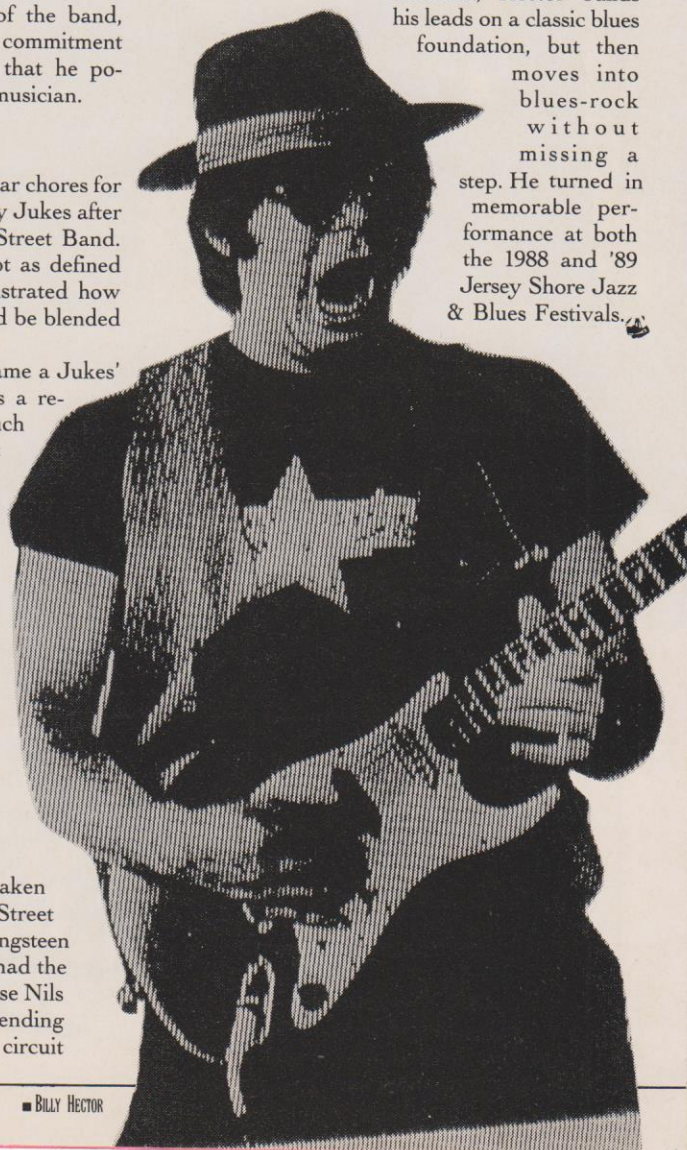
You'll hear a lot of Eric Clapton and Albert Collins in Bandiera's leads, but as a rhythm player, Bandiera can easily recall the tasty licks of Earl Van Dyke and Joe Messina, Motown's main guitar players. Bandiera might very well be the most versatile guitarist the Asbury Park scene ever produced. Few players, past or present, can register the results Bandiera gets, be it in rock, blues, soul, or Juke-style R&B.

■ BILLY HECTOR

Billy Hector wasn't around during the Upstage era when blues was big in Asbury Park. No matter. Fifteen years later he and his group, the Fairlanes, simply created their own little blues scene at the Shore. Today, the Fairlanes embody the classic structures of blues-rock, and no one on the Shore today, except perhaps Harry Lee Jackson, of the group the Hounds, can deliver the blues with the same conviction that Hector can.

Influenced by both Chicago and Texas bluesmen, Hector builds his leads on a classic blues foundation, but then

moves into blues-rock without missing a step. He turned in memorable performance at both the 1988 and '89 Jersey Shore Jazz & Blues Festivals.



■ BILLY HECTOR

Razing Arizona

In what can only be described as the strangest of his club appearances in 1989, Bruce Springsteen joined The Mile High Band at Matt's Saloon in Prescott, Arizona on Sept. 29th. His appearance in this small town between Phoenix and Flagstaff was nothing short of a Western fable.

He rode into town on a silver and blue Harley Davidson motorcycle, according to reports in the *Prescott Courier*. Before hitting Matt's, Bruce and friends downed a Coke or two at the Palace Bar, where he reportedly told patrons he was looking for "biker girls." The troop was on their way to the Grand Canyon according to Bruce, and had moseyed into Prescott around 2 pm.

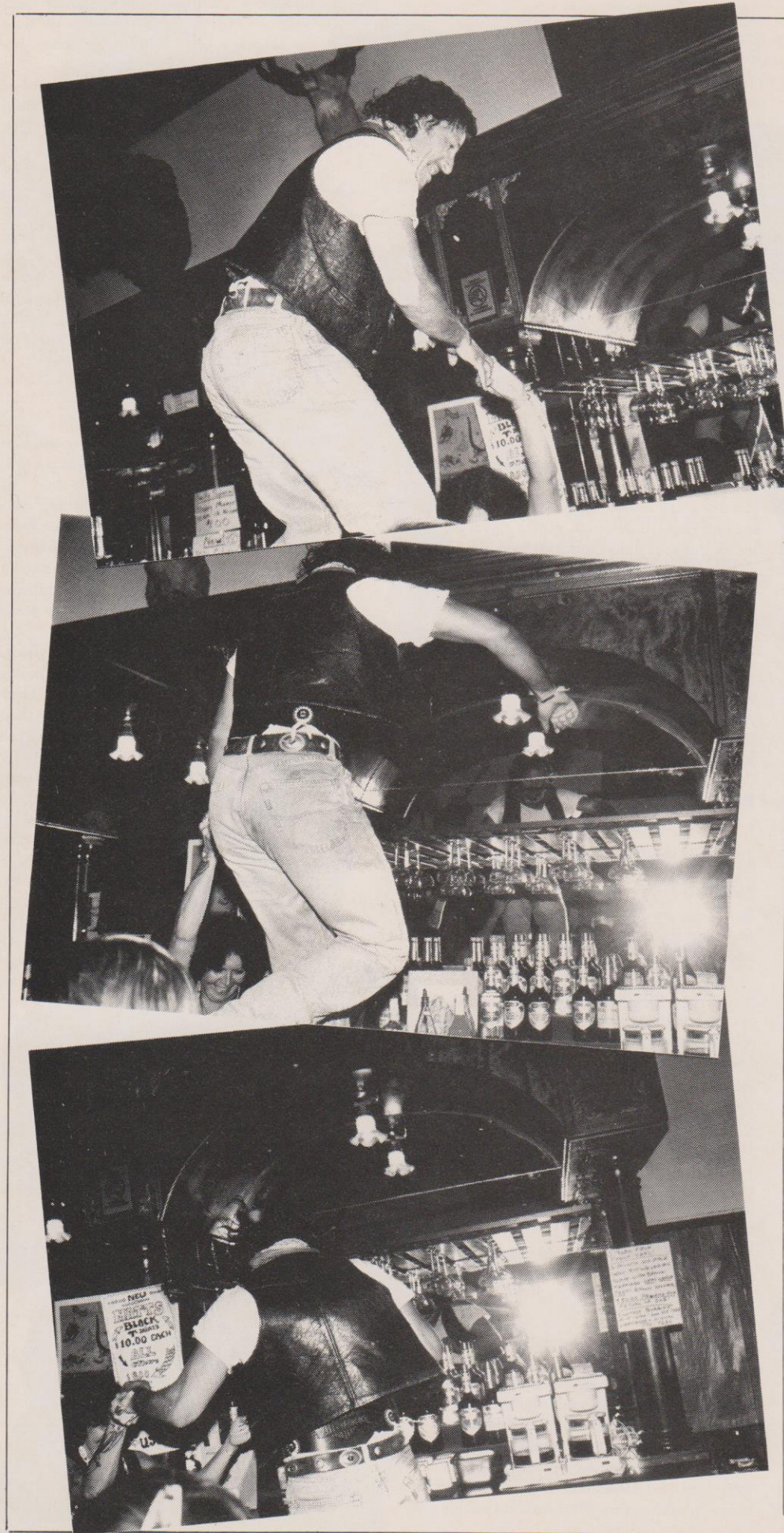
Bruce's search for biker girls led him to Matt's Saloon, a fairly well known whiskey bar and home of Brenda "Bubbles" Pechanec, Matt's bartender and founder of the local chapter of ABATE (the American Brotherhood Aimed Toward Education), a motorcycle group that educates the public about motorcycle safety. And did Bubbles have the biker girl credentials Bruce was looking for? She has appeared in biker magazines like *Easy Rider* and *Harley Women*, and she has a full back tattoo worth about \$3,000. 'Nuff said.

Bruce ordered a Bud and was just hanging out before he was approached by the band to listen to a song written by their drummer Jimmy Morehaus. Bruce said he liked the song and then, according to guitar player Denny Orr, Bruce said, "C'mon boys, let's jam." Bruce began the hour-long set in front of less than a dozen people, dedicating "I'm on Fire" to Bubbles.

The set included "Sweet Little Sixteen," "Don't Be Cruel" and "Route 66." The band asked Bruce to play "Pink Cadillac" (which is probably the most popular bar band song in America), but Bruce said he couldn't remember all the words.

By the end of the set, the crowd had swelled to nearly 100. Bruce stepped offstage and began talking with the regulars and drinking beers, before the crowd got out of hand. "It was mad city," Orr told the *Courier*. "It went from seven or eight people to 80 or 90 in ten minutes, then it went nuts." Bubbles described the scene this way in the *Arizona Republic*: "He was so nice to get up and play with the band, but we didn't talk enough because people kept mugging him. Before he left, he was getting sort of paranoid. People were trying to trip his clothes off."

Bruce broke free and crossed the road to his motorcycle, upon which he headed off down State Highway 89. Before he left, he did bid his final adieu to Bubbles, literally jumping the bar to give her a kiss and pose for a photo. Bubbles and Bruce were parted, but neither forgotten.



PROVE IT ALL NIGHT

Addendum, Part Two



8/16/89 Long Beach, N.J., Cheers

Bruce joins Bobby Bandiera during his regular Wednesday night stint for an excellent 45-minute set that includes "New Orleans," "Mercy, Mercy," "From Small Things," "Keep a Knockin'," "Light of Day" and "Land of 1000 Dances."

9/22/89 Asbury Park, N.J., Stone Pony

Bruce begins his 40th birthday weekend by joining Jimmy Cliff on "Trapped."

9/23/89 Sea Bright, N.J., McLoone's Rum Runner

Bruce is joined at his 40th birthday bash by his mother, Steve Van Zandt, Garry Tallent, Roy Bittan, Max Weinberg, Patti Scialfa and others. This abbreviated E Street Band takes the stage with members

of the Atlantic Coast Band for an eight-song set that includes "Around and Around," "Glory Days," "Twist and Shout," "Havin' a Party," "What'd I Say," "Sweet Little Sixteen" and "Stand By Me," sung by Steve Van Zandt while Bruce danced with his mother.

9/29/89 Prescott, Ariz., Matt's Saloon

Rolling into town on a motorcycle, Bruce and his biker entourage pull into this whiskey bar in search of "biker girls." In addition to dancing with the few he found, Bruce also took the stage with the Mile High Band, for a set that began with "I'm on Fire" and also included "Don't Be Cruel," "Route 66" and "Sweet Little Sixteen." The band asked Springsteen to sing "Pink Cadillac," but Bruce told them he could not remember all the words.



Chimes of Freedom Flashing

Dear Editor:

Today, November 9, I took a second look at my video of Bruce's 1988 East Berlin show. My mind was on the recent unrest in East Germany, but I had not yet heard of today's historic events; instead, I was remembering the day the Berlin Wall went up.

In 1961, we were a military family stationed in West Germany, and for me, the Wall was a very early introduction to the systematic repression of the human spirit. Today, as I listened to the songs Bruce opened with last year in East Berlin ("Badlands," "Out in the Street," "Promised Land"), I was watching the faces of the crowd, wondering which ones remembered that day in 1961 as I did; wondering how many of them might have escaped to the West through Hungary or Czechoslovakia in the past few weeks.

At 5:30, I stopped the tape to watch the

news. My TV screen went from shots of joyful young East Germans singing "Born To Run" to shots of joyful young East Germans chipping away at the Berlin Wall with hammers. And the anchorman said that the Wall, for all intents and purposes, was down.

As a child in 1961, I cried because I didn't understand; today, I cried because I understand so well. The world is a rough and cynical place, and sometimes it's hard to keep believing in a promised land. But the East Germans have proven that, if we hold onto our ideals long enough, these badlands will start treatin' us good.

Carol Kerns
Dallas, TX

No One By Your Side

Dear Editor:

I have been listening to Bruce's music for 15 years. Very intently, very passionately. But while the words and music of Springsteen have meant more to me than... well, you know, I've always felt that the E Street Band were equally important. The sound, energy and the friendship that came out in their music made it all seem worthwhile.

I've seen 30 Bruce shows but I doubt if I'll ever see another. To say "your services won't be needed" makes me feel like I've wasted the last 15 years.

Tom Mann
Ridgewood, NY

Show a Little Faith

Dear Editor:

I read the reports in the press on the reputed "split" of the E Street Band and was happy to hear the very tempered response on the hotline.

Although I love Bruce with the E Street Band, it is Bruce's lyrics and music that I love the most, and whatever he chooses to do and with whomever, as an artist he has to be free to experiment. We, as fans, cannot dictate how he interprets his music. As usual the press probably exaggerated everything. They are so paranoid, so quick to try to imply that Bruce is "the heavy" in all this. Now in *USA Today*, they report the fans may have overreacted! They are the ones who overreacted and who abuse journalistic standards by writing judgmental articles and taking photographs to get the story they wish to write, and then when they write it, it's as if they are in his bedroom! And they question his morality! Really, is it any surprise the man rarely gives interviews, why should he?

As an admirer of the man's artistry, I know whatever his next move, it will be creative and experimental. He's an extraordinary communicator, artist and man. If he has personal happiness as well, that would be perfect.

Maureen Wilkin
Toronto, ON

Two Steps Back

Dear Editor:

I just heard the news today that Bruce announced that the E Street Band will not appear on the next album or tour. Actually, it shouldn't be surprising, but it is disappointing. Bruce's best albums, in my opinion, have been *Born in the USA* and *The River*. I bought a *Tunnel of Love* tape, listened to it for about a week and went back to *USA*, *River*, and *Live*. Sorry, I know it offends many Springsteen fans, but Bruce is at his best doing rock 'n' roll with the E Street Band.

This is a sad day for me, my two favorite singers are Bruce and Bob Seger. Seger seems to have retired and Bruce keeps trying to be the male version of Linda Ronstadt.

Bill Cord
Savannah, GA

From Small Things

Dear Editor:

Thanks to Deborah Mayer for writing about the BoDeans in issue #30, Fall, 1989. The BoDeans may have been compared to Bruce, U2, the Everly Brothers and others in the past, but I think they can convince the industry that they're very much their own band. When reviewers start to recognize the BoDeans' influence on newer bands, they'll have come into their own. There's no need to pin a "Springsteen-sound" or "U2-sound" on this band. The labels don't suit them.

I will say, however, that two of the best concerts in the world are Springsteen's and U2's. And the BoDeans aren't far behind. I saw them

(Continued on next page)

BOSS TV



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VIDEO #1: Folkways: A Vision Shared. Video history of the music of Woody Guthrie and Leadbelly. Exclusive live footage of Bruce and the E Street Band performing "Vigilante Man" and "I Ain't Got No Home." Bruce interview and more. \$19.95

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(Continued from previous page)

twice last year and can't wait to catch 'em again. I left the shows elated, and outrageously pleased with my latest musical discovery. Like Bruce and U2, some day these tickets will sell out large venues in record time. I had better be one of those lucky ticket-holders. Front row, center.

Amy Carmusin
Newtonville, MA

Fade Away

Dear Editor:

I was shocked today by the news on the radio, the announcer said that Bruce Springsteen was getting rid of the E Street Band. I just cannot imagine Bruce on stage without Clarence by his side. Bruce and the band fit so well together and make such great music. It is a real tragedy to see this happen. Bruce will never be the same without the E Streeters backing him up. The concerts will no longer have the power that they did. Bruce Springsteen will lose much of his greatness without the band and will fall to the depth of being just another performer.

Michael Varley
Allenhurst, NJ

Walk Like A Man

Dear Editor:

I received the Backstreets book yesterday and I can see your book and magazine is a true labor of love. I'm sure all readers are thankful for your devotion and hard work you have done.

Only one thing I've found upsets me (in fact pisses me off). Please, please do not make political statements (i.e. gun control) as in issue #30. I do agree with your father and feel you should listen and try to understand his point of view (and our constitutional rights).

But above all, this magazine did not waste space on the Bruce/Julianne divorce because why? It did not deal with what the magazine was published to do! Please do not waste precious space on your (or anyone else's) political views.

Dave Mayercheck
Mt. Pleasant, PA

Skin Like Leather

Dear Editor:

It was extremely depressing to read a couple of the letters printed in issue #27 and find out there are still people out there who think that "Born in the USA" is about patriotism. How else could you explain the right-wing raving found in the paragraphs of the letters written by Matt Ditchey of Youngstown, Ohio and "A Republican" from New Jersey.

Due to its link with rebellion and individualism, rock 'n' roll from the beginning has been associated with the left politically. The truly great artists of rock (Beatles, Dylan, Fogerty, U2) have always instilled this message in their music and Bruce (a true rocker) naturally has followed in the fold. To say that social conscience and politics should not be explored in

your magazine because it has nothing to do with Bruce's music, is totally inaccurate. It has everything to do with it. If that was not true then how can you explain his choice of "War" and "Chimes of Freedom" as covers, his participation in the Amnesty International Human Rights Tour, and the obvious meaning within songs such as "Mansion on the Hill," "Used Cars," "Seeds" etc....

Another inaccuracy is "A Republican"'s claim that Bruce's music should not be used to influence individuals who may have yet to develop politically. Why not? The moral majority is always trying to force feed us their conservative diet and the government is constantly utilizing the media to its own advantage. The brainwashing of nationalism begins at a young age in school when they tell you to raise your hand for the Pledge of Allegiance and in the blatant self-righteousness of the history books. So why shouldn't Bruce try to influence someone with his music? All in all he's just another factor in the decision-making process.

My advice to those who are disturbed by Bruce's political and social stands is to seek alternative performers (there are hundreds of "unoffensive" acts out there who are saying nothing with their music). Anyone who cheers the acquitting of a bigoted crook like Evan Mecham and then degrades a concerned citizen like Steve Van Zandt doesn't have the slightest idea of what rock 'n' roll is even about.

Please don't stop addressing the political message within Bruce's material. The only improvement you can make in your magazine is to stop printing the ranting of closed minded right wingers who have missed the point contained in the music of Bruce Springsteen.

Randy J. Hansen
Heidelberg, West Germany

Take 'Em As They Come

Dear Editor:

Does not the history of Bruce Springsteen essentially embody the credo of "the American way"? Consider: the man utilized his inherent talent, worked mercilessly for years, and earned his just rewards. There is neither conceit nor immorality in this. Frankly, the American education system indirectly suggests we be hard-working, law-abiding citizens, always striving for success. Indeed, society accentuates this particular work ethic. One can hardly blame Bruce for being an American....

The cynics of Bruce Springsteen ought to pick up their Fenders and spend a few years on the club circuit, just to see if they, too, don't encounter "the American way."

Trina Hess
Cranberry, PA

Address all correspondence to the Editor, Backstreets, PO Box 51225, Seattle, WA 98115. We reserve the right to edit letters for space reasons. Typing and double-spacing (and shortening) your letter greatly increases the chance of it appearing in Backstreets.



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HAPPY BIRTHDAY SUE JENSEN! "BECAUSE Tramps like us..." Suzette

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LITTLE KAREN — YOU MEANS SO MUCH TO ME. You set me straight & walkin' proud. I'll love you forever. Your Perl

NOTES FROM NEW JERSEY: CONGRATULATIONS Steve & Debbie Scarpa you finally made it! Get ready Tess, we're next!! Thanks Erik for finding my book, AND Let's get creative Bruce, we're waiting patiently! Darren (I'm back)

BRUCE — MERRY CHRISTMAS BUDDY! I WISH YOU all the best during the Holidays. Hope Santa's great to ya. Can't wait to meet you, please write soon. Merry Christmas & Happy New Year Bruce Springsteen! A Fan & Buddy forever, Mark Shmigalsky

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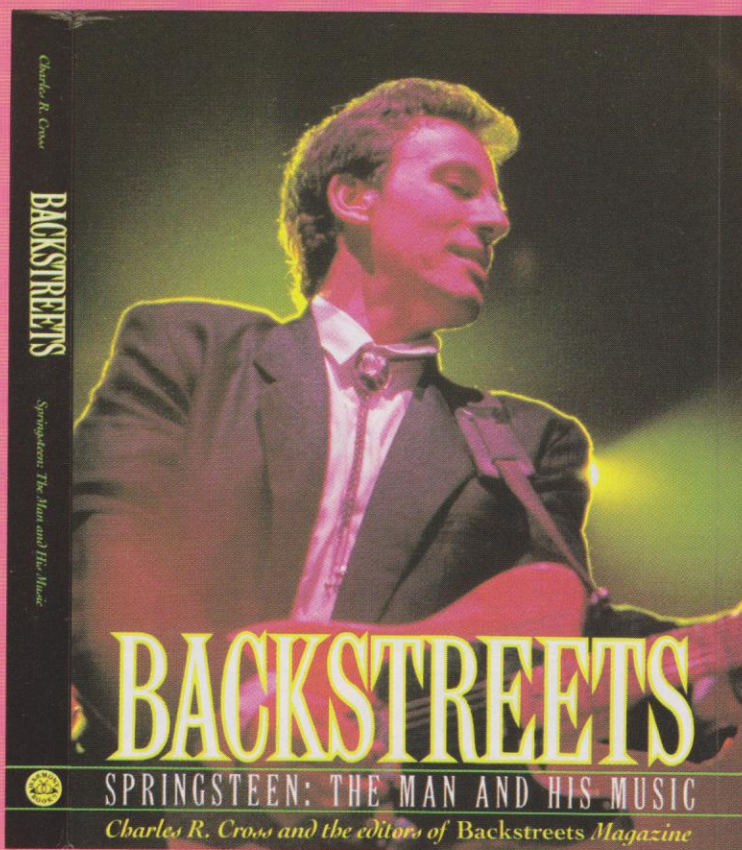
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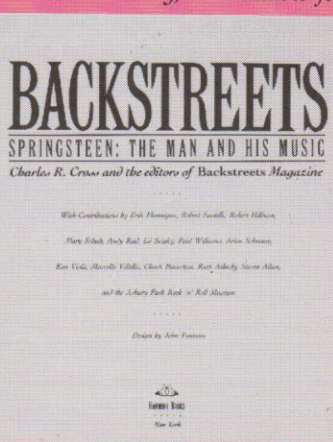
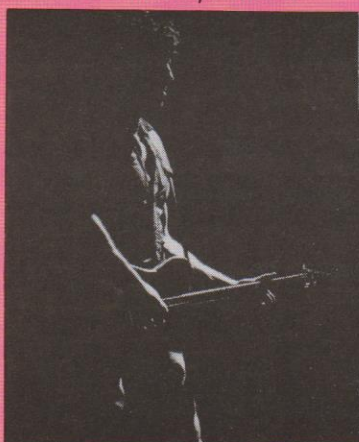
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exclusively through **Backstreets Magazine**. This edition is very limited so order soon as it is sure to sell out. This special edition, released on September 23rd for Springsteen's 40th birthday, is available for **only \$24.95**, the same price

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Backstreets	7/1/89	Monthly	July
5. Publication of this Statement	6. Publication of this Statement	7. Publication of this Statement	8. Publication of this Statement
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For years Backstreets Records has been publishing the world's greatest catalog of authorized and official Bruce Springsteen records and books. To get our Boss catalog you can either send \$5 to get on the list for one year (or \$2 for the current catalog), or \$8 a year overseas for airmail service. In exchange you'll get our catalogs, filled with more Springsteen items than you'll find anywhere else in the world at reasonable prices, backed by quick service and our stand on it guarantee. A new catalog is just out in time for Christmas and we've even added 800 Toll Free phone service to help you order gifts or just presents for yourself.

But now we've added a new service and a new product — a video catalog. The first edition of this video is scheduled to be out by Jan. 10th and it covers classic Bruce Springsteen posters from the early days through to *Tunnel of Love*. over 100 posters are shown in living color and as a historical document every Springsteen collector will want this video! The video also serves as a catalog for the many one-of-a-kind posters we currently have in our stock and comes with a written price list noting which posters are available. If you're looking to

add a classic Springsteen Steel Mill poster to your living room, this video allows you to see the posters first in living color before you buy them. And even if you're not in the market for a collectible poster, the video gives you a chance to see these posters for a very small price. Costs in reproducing the video are such that we have to charge \$10 for the video itself but that fee is fully refundable with an order (add \$2 shipping in the US, \$5 Canada and overseas). For \$10 even if you're not a poster collector you can have a video document of all the great Springsteen posters narrated by the Backstreets staff. It's essentially like getting a tour of our warehouse of collectibles through the use of a video tape. Price is \$10 plus shipping and video catalog is available in VHS only. (European customers note: this is US VHS and may not be compatible with your system.) A limited number will be made and, like the posters on the video itself, they are first come, first serve so get your order in now. Send to Catalog Requests, PO Box 51219, Seattle, WA 98115. Or if you'd like to charge your video catalog or the printed catalog subscription, simply call our order line at (206) 728-7603, M-F 10 to 5 PST.

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- **A free personal classified ad in each issue.** All SuperSubs will be allowed one free classified (20 word limit) in each issue of Backstreets (no "for sale" ads are included in this deal — only trades, pen pals and the like). This alone is worth over \$40 a year.

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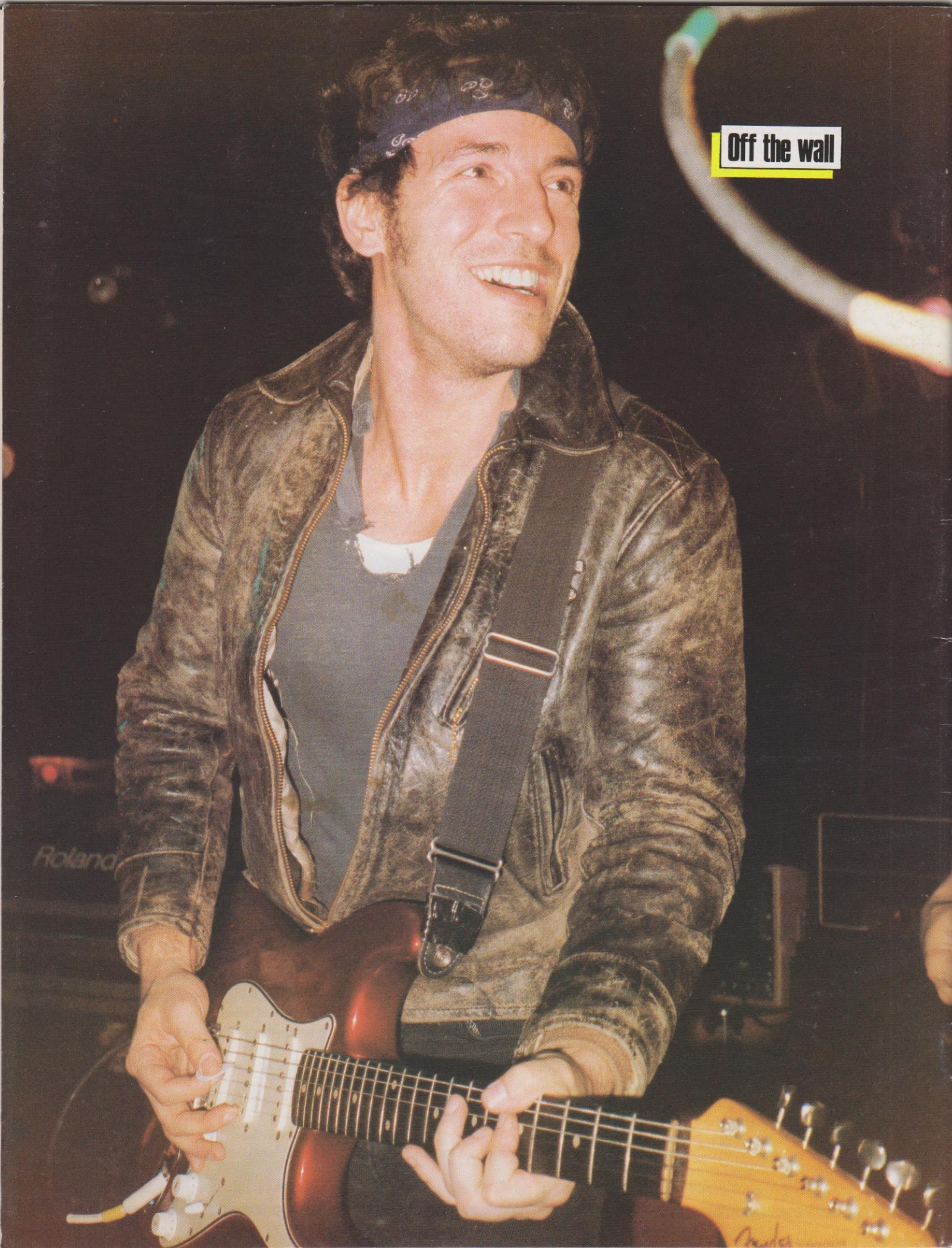
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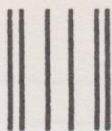
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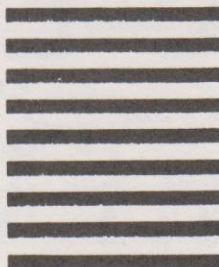
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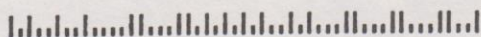
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Contest

'Yeah, it sound

HAVE YOU EVER LISTENED TO THE RADIO and heard a song you swore sounded like Bruce, but listened just long enough to find out it was actually Steve Earle, John Hiatt or the BoDeans? You've just entered the world of "The Bruce Influence." Over the past ten years there have been dozens of songs that attempt to sound just like Bruce, mirror his lyrical style, sound like tributes to him or simply show the unmistakable stamp of his influence. We asked you to send us your suggestions of songs that sounded like Bruce or show his influence. Your responses covered a wide range of artists, though certain names did pop up with frequency.

The trend is bound to continue, because this generation of new rock artists is the first who grew up listening to Springsteen. There is a fine line, however, between artists who write in Bruce's style, and those who seem to outright copy his lyrics and music. Beyond that, some artists have begun blatantly to borrow his onstage techniques. At this summer's Moscow Peace Festival, Jon Bon Jovi gave an impassioned speech about freedom, with keyboard accompaniment, that was a virtual replay of Bruce's "Spare Parts" story and his mid-show Amnesty speech. As for others like Steve Earle, we'll let you make the call. Below is a list of some of your suggestions and the reasons behind them. We haven't even heard of all the artists, but we will assume some of you have. We pulled five entries at random for Backstreets Staff T-shirts. The winners are: Mimi Chamberlin, Cincinnati, OH; Sean Cronin, Blastell, NY; James Ashby, Stafford, VA; Tricia Leon, Alexandria, VA; Tina Rateliff, Chillicothe, OH.

"Heaven is a Place on Earth," Belinda Carlisle. I was a little surprised that Bruce would give a song to Carlisle, but then who expected "Fire" from the Pointer Sisters. Then when I bought the record I was shocked to find the names Rick Nowels and Ellen Shipley. Could either of these writers be from Asbury, or, as I imagine, was it written as a (very good) rip off of a Springsteen. (Joyce Peters, Queensbury, NY)

"Walk of Life," Dire Straits. Kind of like "Working on the Highway" musically, with the main character "down in the tunnel trying to make it pay." A *Born in the USA* reject? (Suzanne Oliver, Shawnee, KS)

"It'll Be Easier in the Morning," Hothouse Flowers. Although sounding like a cross between U2 and Bruce, the first verse has Bruce written all over it in both sound and theme. (Jeffery Chimera, Jamestown, NY)

"Lover," Michael Stanley Band. I guess it's the sax and the line "Thank God for the man who put the white lines on the highway," but I can hear Bruce belting out "Ooh, lover." It's a Bruce song! (Theresa Kolk, Cleveland, OH)

"You're Only Lonely," J.D. Souther. Sort of reminds me of "Janey, Don't You Lose Heart." Not by the style or sound, but the

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War)," Colin James. It's pure Springsteen. Not only is it a fast rocker in the Springsteen mode, but it's about two of Bruce's favorite topics. No denying it, Colin has been listening to the little guy and writing and recording Springsteen-like songs, all in admiration of the "Prisoner of Rock 'n' Roll!" (Greg Reiser, Ottawa, ON)

"Wrecking Ball," Neil Young. The lyrics and feeling are like "Atlantic City." Neil: "Meet me at the wrecking ball, wrecking ball. Wear something pretty and white, and we'll go dancing tonight." Bruce: "Put your makeup

LP with lyrics like: "One last look at my land, auctioneer with his gavel in hand, and he says, 'it's got to go.' Worked this piece all my life, broke my heart and it took my wife." (Bob Bobarsky, Old Saybrook, CT)

"The Way You Make Me Feel," Michael Jackson. The first verse makes me feel that the "Bad" one wants to "Ramrod." (Brian Anthony Smith, San Diego, CA)

Copperhead Road and *Exit O* LPs, Steve Earle. Blatant rip offs. (T. Whitaker, West Yorks, England) 🍷

Book parties in four cities

TO MARK THE RELEASE OF THE NEW BOOK, *Backstreets, Springsteen: The Man and His Music*, Backstreets held parties in four cities across the nation for subscribers. The book's release was kicked off by a party in Asbury Park, N.J. with a capacity crowd filling T Birds Cafe. Subscribers came to that party from as far away as Florida and Boston and met such luminaries as Vini Lopez and Bob Alfano of the Castles. Bruce Tramps also heard the sounds of the bands Jah Love and the Lance Larson Group.

The next stop on the party express was Philadelphia where an overflow crowd partied at the Cherry Street Tavern. The Philly party was filmed by the syndicated television show *Hard Copy* and appearances were made by legendary DJ Ed Sciaky and photographer Phil Ceccola.

The Chicago party was held at the Avalon Nightclub, formerly called the Quiet Knight and the site of Springsteen's 1973 Chicago show. That party featured subscribers from as far away as North Carolina, Michigan and Minnesota.

The Seattle release party was held at the Trolleyman Pub where a large crowd listened to Bruce tunes and sampled microbrewed beer. 🍷



Vini Lopez signs copies of *Backstreets, Springsteen: The Man and His Music* at the book release party in Asbury Park.

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ATTACK

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...k scene has been a core of guitar-
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three music forms.

Of course not every guitarist with links to Asbury Park and its music scene played riffs and solos steeped in black music and English-styled blues. In the '80s, for instance, a number of prominent area guitarists explored heavy metal, pop, and punk paths. Bon Jovi's Richie Sambora and Ozzy Osbourne's Zak Wylant, have Jersey Shore music roots, but neither could ever be mistaken for a guitarist influenced by, say, Steve Cropper or B.B. King.

Guitarists Jim Babjek and Pat NiDizio of the Smithereens were Stone Pony regulars in the early '80s. Yet it's obvious that their roots are laced with early Union Jack rock strains. Their sound extends back to the mid-'60s guitar sounds of the Who's Pete Townshend, the Kinks' Dave Davies, and the Beatles' George Harrison.

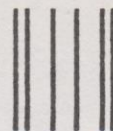
Despite this, a large number of Asbury Park guitarists drew inspiration from black music, and when they exchanged ideas during late night jam sessions, something the scene was always known for, a particular guitar sound developed. Accented by blues-flavored solos and clipped, clean rhythm passages, the Asbury Park guitar sound filled area clubs and helped bring international attention to the scene, especially in the mid-'70s.

Today the Asbury Park music scene is more diverse than ever before. As a result, the traditional Asbury Park sound is but one small element in a scene that's so layered it's difficult to determine where it's headed. Pop, mainstream metal, and roots rock bands compete with alternative rock, reggae, post-modern, post-punk, dance, and blues-rock bands for gigs, fan support and media attention. The old days of one scene, one sound are gone, probably forever.

Who were the guitarists who helped create the Asbury Park Sound? Ten come to mind immediately, although there were undoubtedly others. These players not only contributed to the Asbury Park Sound in the years 1964- 1984, but as individual musicians they stood out above others for their skill, innovation, and ability to influence.

They are:

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